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The Retirement of Mr. Galloway Kyle

THE Council of the Poetry Society announces with sincere regret the retirement through advancing years of Mr. Galloway Kyle, one of the Founders of the Society, its Director and the Editor of this Journal; and it desires to take the opportunity of making public expression of its appreciation of his most valuable long-continued service. Mr. Kyle was one of a group of people who conceived, nearly forty years ago, the idea of forming an association that should have as its inspiration the cause of poetry in that special sense which is our concern to-day, viz., the speaking of poetry rather than its creation. This primary object has never been lost sight of although tremendous encouragement has also been given to the making of poetry by the provision, under his direction, of a service of criticism for would-be poets; the institution of numerous competitions; and the opportunity of publication in this Journal and in the Society's co-operative supplement, *Poetry of To-day*.

But Mr. Kyle never forgot the intention of the Founders and to-day our largest activity by far is the system of examinations and auditions conducted in schools, colleges and academies all over the country. It would not be too much to say that Mr. Kyle's greatest achievement is not that through the vicissitudes of the last forty years, including two world wars, he should have preserved the Society and built it up to its present state of influence and prosperity but that he should have started the spreading fashion in our schools of inculcating a love of our glorious heritage of poetry which comes from a knowledge of how to speak it. To say or recite a poem beautifully is to bring to the ear once again the great music which inspired the poem's first creation, and the work begun so long ago by him has undoubtedly been one of the most potent causes of to-day's unflagging interest in this great art of spiritual communication. Mr. Kyle saw clearly enough that to preserve that poetic heritage from mouldering disuse it was not sufficient to publish a periodical journal, and with characteristic insight and energy he set about the far more difficult, but much more rewarding, task of manufacturing appreciative readers for it. Today he sees the result in a membership for the Society of many thousands and a steady increase in the Society's usefulness and influence wherever English is spoken.

During the course of his lifetime of service to these objects Mr. Kyle has never flagged nor faltered in his devotion to a Society which will be his enduring monument. He has had many colleagues, co-adjutors and helpers during the long years but, out-living them all, has never failed to find new ones and to inspire them with his faith. He takes into his retirement the respect and the good wishes of us, his latest colleagues, and his welfare will now be the concern of that Society whose interests throughout his own life he put first.

H. W. HARDING,
Chairman of Council.

THE FOLLOWING WAS THE WINNING POEM IN THE JULY-AUGUST PREMIUM COMPETITION:

The Divine Illusion

PART I.

Male Voice

AND tremblingly upon the vibrant air
The last notes of the concord fled away,
Pursued by liquid echoes sweet, which sought
To stay their flight, and were themselves dispersed
By the soft hush which cloaks the emptiness
Of silence, when to the enraptured mind
The world has seemed a high-towered palace, built
Of sounds melodious, inhabited
By sounds more pure than is the flowing song
Sung by the hidden spring under the reeds.
The fingers, white, and blush-tipped like the buds
Of the wild dog-rose, lingered on the strings
And then were still; throbbed no more the throats
From whence divinest harmonies had sprung.
Only the light moved, glanced on the coiling locks
Of shining hair, and gleamed like mother-of-pearl
In the white softness of the folded wings.
Over bright eyes pale eye-lids closed, as flowers,
Which in light's warm caress have yielded up
Their beauty, and poured forth their souls in joy,
Close up their petals in the quiet of eve.
And silence stole out of the vaulted sky
Crept in and out the fleecy clouds and stayed
The river's solemn flow, and reigned with light
In majesty. E'en the ambrosial winds
Which waft upon the air perfumes as sweet
As is the scent of musk, wild orchid, or the rare
White lilies-of-the-valley in the shade,
Paused, and were still. And quiet were the courts
Of Heaven.

But there came a Voice
More deep in melody than the massed choirs
Of Angels and Archangels in the sky,
More sorrowful than music born of pain,
More gentle than the whispering of doves,
More tender than the lover's pledge of love.
And all the hosts of heaven silent stood
To hear the Voice.

The Voice of God

O Sons of light who live in holy peace
With Light, My angel children and My saints
Who in My Presence find desire fulfilled,
Joy ultimate and Beauty absolute,
Yourselves most beautiful, at Beauty's shrine
Meet worshippers, My love and peace are yours
Freely bestowed for all Eternity.
But O My children, tears may flow in Heaven,
And sorrow veil the luminous glow that burns
Over the vales, the streams, the blossom-trees,
And the cool, lingering shades of Paradise,
A thousand brilliancies be muted by one thought
One stab of anguish through the Heart of God!
The flowers of Heaven bloom, and silvered leaves
Gleam soft; rose-laden winds whisper sweet tales,
Of blessed joys; the emerald pools inlaid
With rubies, from the mossy slopes receive
A shower of pearls; the ever-changing moods
Of Beauty here unfold like the great acts
Of life's eternal drama. And the Son
Looks on His Father with the eyes of Love.
But yet the Heart of God is riven;
Hear you not
The misery which cries on Heaven, the loud
Discordant clamourings of greed and wrath,
Injustice wailing for redress, and hate
Shrieking malignant curses to a deafened world
Hurling through space to chaos. See you not
Where the green slime of sin seeps up the shore
Of Earth, fouling the air, and poisoned Life
Groans in convulsive agony and dies?
See how the wings of Satan overspread
The falling world, with grey and clammy mists
Of shifting doubts which veil the precious Truth,
As is the molten silver of the moon
Veiled by storm wisps of thickening cloud, which blind
Her radiance. Ah Satan, now your nets
Are twined like burning fibres round the souls
Of men, and with a searing pain consume
The good I have implanted there!
The wings of Satan overspread the world.
Their touch lies like a slimy stain upon
The virgin whiteness of the lily-flower,
A trail of mud across the sleeping snows.
And where they touch rises a stench of Death.
Have I not made it fair, a paradise
Where no vile thing might enter, did I not
Give you, O men, the key of the great gates
Which barred the entrance of the Evil One?

See how the gates gape wide, wide to the winds
That blow from hell; their poisonous breath sucks up
The dew that glistens in the morning sun,
The mystic perfumes of the lilac-trees,
The scented honey of the orchid blooms,
Translucent shadows from the dreaming pools,
The airy colours of a rain-washed sky.
It chars the vivid wings of tropic birds,
It dulls the steely glimmer of the stars,
And pales the blaze of light upon the sea.
So Beauty turns to ashes and men stand
Aside, uncaring, their indifferent eyes
Clouded with gold-dust. Am I not betrayed?
. . . . . Out of the pregnant depths of love
Fashioned My Hands a vineyard, where the vines
Drooped luscious fruit, like velvet amethysts.
In the soft air they glowed, and on their leaves
Cast purple light. Against potential harm
I built a wall about the vineyard high,
And gave My tender work into the care
Of husbandmen. And when the time was ripe
Sent I My Servants for the fruits thereof.
But those same husbandmen to whom My trust
Was given, would not that I should reap My love's
Reward; they envied Me the fruits, the power which springs
From all life. So are My servants killed.
Shall Beauty lie despoiled by sin, shall Good
Stripped naked, perish 'neath the pelt of stones?
Shall not the majesty of Heaven's King,
Inflamed by Truth's most righteous wrath, proclaim
The doom of Good with Evil in one fiery stroke
From Michael's indiscriminate sword?
But Mercy murmurs in the ear of God
And Love in beggar's weeds enters the Heart
Of God, pleading for men.

Whom shall I send
Unto these men, to teach the perfect peace
Which lies in service of their sovereign Lord?
My servants will they not hear; them they kill . . . . .
My well-beloved Son, Him will I send.
My only Son Him will I send to reap
My Harvest. They will reverence My Son . . . . .
Surely they will respect My only Son.

* * *

PART II.

Male Voice.

A movement rippled through the golden host
Shooting forth light into the clear blue air;
Sudden it rustled as a playful breeze
Soft brushes through a field of ripening corn.
A sigh, light as from a child's lips, breathed
Upon the silence which enfolded it
In deepening silence. Now were the bowed heads
Raised, and now countless eyes which brightly glowed
Like dewy star-lamps in white skies, looked up
To where at the right hand of God the Son
In jewelled light and burning majesty was throned.
Fair was His Face, more fair than all the flowers
Which blend their perfumes with sweet spikenard
And subtle cinnamon, brighter His Brow
Than sunrise on the Himalayan Snows,
His Eyes more tender than the mellow light
Which throws gold shadows on the drowsy sea
At evening. And from His throne was shed
A radiant glory yet more burning-bright
Than latent fire in the Archangels' swords.
Love and divine compassion in Him found
Expression absolute.

Voice of the Prophet.

Mighty Creator of the star-hung worlds
Beloved Father, I would sing to You
A song touching Your vineyard; would my song
Might be a song of joy and fruitfulness
Within Your vineyard, would that I might sing
Of the sweet fragrance of the new-formed vine
Yearning toward the sun, his sultry kiss
Purpling her eager lips. The tower is built,
The winepress waits the softness of the fruit.
The high, white wall about the terraced hill
Smokes in the heat, under the bright blue flames
Which burn the noon-day sky. And in the dawn,
In the green glow of sunrise drinks the vine
Deep of the cooling dew. This vision lies
Mocked, in the arid dust. My song's sweet notes
Like frost-nipped rose-buds, die before their life
Puts forth its beauty. Therefore because in time
I sang of justice and the breaking-down
Of the high wall, the rotting vine's slow death
Beneath the glare of the unpitying sun,
Thirsting, and drinking not, for no dew fell,
No gentle rain its misty fingers laid
Upon the sere leaves, but the strangling hold
Of briar and thorn which battened on the vine
And sucked out life,—therefore because I sang
Of bitterness, let now my voice be raised

In strong dissuasion; Lord, send not Your Son!
Did You not look for Judgment and behold
Oppression? Even now I hear the cry
Afar, as from a solitary hill,
And Righteousness has fled the darkened slopes.

Voice of the Soul.

I look upon the face of Him we love
And see a shadow circling the fair Brow.
I look upon the Hands which clasp Your own
And see them riven, like white birds impaled.
I plead, O King of Heaven, that His life
May not be broken on the rack of sin.
Shall they, the wicked husbandmen, spare Him
More than Your servants? Shall they spare the Son
To whom the inheritance shall fall? The depths
To which mankind may sink are even yet
Unsounded, like uncharted seas which guard
For ever 'neath illimitable wastes
The secrets of their coral floors. I see
Dimly the half-forgotten years rise up
Like shrouded figures in a mist of rain
Fearing the light. And with cold lips
They murmur of warm things, the hush of dusk,
The shadows lengthening where the trees arched high
Over the wall, the long gold lane of light
Flung by the dying sun across the hill,
And I watching the sun, transformed, gold-struck,
Unquiet, and quivering, until I felt
He stood there with his eyes upon my face,
Held in the same gold spell. Reflected in
My eyes, the crimsoned banners of the sun
Flamed brighter, and the paling sky's green light
More softly glowed . . . . The dreaming shadows stole
Quiet about us, and the rising moon
Traced silver patterns on the yew-tree boughs.
Over the fields the tide of silence flowed
Merging the earth and sky and our two selves in one
Immeasurable sphere of shadowed silver.
Did not the spirit of the moon stoop low
From her blue throne to smile upon our love,
Believing our pledge true? . . . . .
The shrouded figures in the mist of rain
Grope with chilled fingers through the desolate halls
Of long-lost dreams, and with cold lips,
Whisper of bitter things, of broken flowers,
And stifled songs. Their frozen tears glint
In their tired eyes . . . . .
Here, Dove of Peace, is rest
And sweet tranquillity. Send Him not there
Where is no trust, no truth, no lasting love!

* * *

PART III.

Male Voice.

A lowly murmur of assent arose.
Imploring eyes were raised unto the throne
Of light incarnate. The King of Heaven smiled:
The trees broke into blossom and the birds
Spread out their jewelled plumage on the boughs.
The flowers distilled perfumes more rare which fled
Upon the honeysuckled breeze. And high
In ecstasy the fountains leapt, and fell
Like silver darts in to the gleaming pools.
As the gold shafts of summer dawns which pierce
And warm the peaceful skies, so did His smile
Waken new life. And from His lifted Hands
Light flowed over the throng as from twin orbs,
And the three stars which crowned His diadem flung out
Radiance untold. In sweet submission to His Father's will
The Son, as the meek snowdrop with the first dews bowed,
Bent His bright Head.

The Voice of God.

Now is the hour come. Now shall the Heavens
Resound in mighty praise of this My Son.
Him do I send to gather in the yield,
Him do I give that this great act of Love
May show to men the heart of God. Have I
A gift more precious to bestow than this?
Would that my Life, the very Life of God
Sufficed, but sacrifice demands that Love
Shall yield its treasure up, though Light itself be dimmed.

Male Voice.

So in the presence of the shining hosts
Silently thronging the high courts where light
Glowed with an opal lustre, was the Word
Spoken. And all the hierarchies of Powers
And Principalities, Seraphs and Saints,
Acclaimed the Word. The vast of Heaven rang
With alleluyas, mounting as the wave
Impelled by tidal urges, onward rolls
With gathering momentum to the shore.
The mighty echoes rose and fell, and built
A bridge of sound, spanning the stream of Life
Which winds its way through the Elysian fields.
Over its golden span the Angels leaned
Like lilies mirrored in a field of glass,
While at the right Hand of God, the Son
Shone forth with glory which transcended theirs.
Brighter His crown than all the far-flung stars

Which hotly burn in purple skies, His robe
More dazzling than the light of tropic suns
On heavy-lidded seas, or the white fires
Struck from a crystal sphere; His sceptre glowed
As if endowed with life. On Him the Father looked
And lo! His Face transfigured, with a light
So glorious that the Angels dared not gaze
But drew their folded wings about their brows.
So robed in radiancy the Son went forth
From the celestial realms of Love and Truth.
So the most Beautiful stepped out from Heaven
Love's seven lamps bright-burning at the gates
And Heaven's music at His going-forth
Rang more sweet than bird-song in the quiet dawn.
So in the stillness of a star-pierced night
He laid aside the glory of His Throne,
Entered the darkness of a woman's womb.

Female Voices: 1st Voice.

Where was this woman found so pure and fair
That she the Son of God might carry 'neath
Her heart? Was she the mother of a King
A royal maiden proud and flaxen-haired,
Her home a palace by the river-brim
Cool glint of marble in the mirrored halls
Gold-tasselled pillows for the royal head,
White linen spread, and shaded lights' soft gleam?

2nd Voice.

O great white star, that in the lonely sky
Burns with a light unwavering as the moon's
When at the full she unattended rides,
Her filmy cloud-train banished till the dawn,
Why in the stillness of this dreaming night
Do you move eastwards, with so calm a tread?

3rd Voice.

I see across the sand three shadows move,
Silent, for sound is deadened by the sand.
Eastwards they move as following the Star
I see a star-beam strike upon a crown
It glitters on a yellow topaz stone.

2nd Voice.

Oh beautiful the night and the world sleeps
Unmindful! Hidden hills echo the sky's
Sweet, far-off music. A pale streak of light
Flickers across the courtyard of an inn.
The shadows stir at the bleat of a lamb.

1st Voice.

No, not a palace for the King of Kings.
No royal maiden to be Queen of Heaven.
Only rough-hewn stabling to shelter Him,
A peasant girl to sing to Him of Love.

3rd Voice.

In the warm, breathing dusk he found her there
Soft-voiced Gabriel, bearing an olive branch.
She walked alone in sweet meditation,
Walked in the garden when the flowers were closed.
He shone: his brightness clothed her, like a robe
Of bridal-white. She trembled when he spoke,
His words were strange, she did not understand,
"Mary,—the chosen flower of Israel!
To be mother of her God made Man!" . . . . .
So was He heralded, the Prince of Peace,
Poverty His birthright, and Hate and a Sword,
His Glory fading from His consciousness,
Fading, as fades a visionary dream.
Only His mother with the calm deep eyes,
Only His mother sang to Him of Love.

* * *

PART IV.

The Voice of Christ. (*In a garden.*)

O traitress moon, cold queen of the night sky,
Your wistful radiance speaks to men of love,
Softening the harshness of unlovely things,
With velvet shadows cloaking ugliness,
Your silver fingers, in a light caress
Lie soft across the forehead of the world.
The desolate slopes of far-receding hills
Close in with stealthy step, and quiet stand,
Unfrowning guardians of the dreaming lake.
I hear the waters lapping on the shore,
I hear the whisper of the olive groves . . . . .
The moon's white radiance gleams in maidens' eyes
And wakens men's desires. But love is false,
Turns bitter in the tasting; neither the love
Of women is found pure, nor yet the love
Of man for man, brother for brother, child
For parent. In night's fertile womb there lurks
Evil more loathsome than the vilest stench
Of rotting fens. The cradling shadows lull

The night-sleep of false gods of vice and war,
Clamour and turmoil, wantonness and power.
This is the condemnation, that the Light,
True Light, is come into the world, and men
Love darkness rather than the Light, because
Their deeds are evil and the scales are thick
Upon their eyes. My children, walk in Light
While is the Light still with you, lest you die!
Cold is the shadow of the lonely hill.
My feet must bleed upon the stony path.
Peaceful the slumbering hill, and no life stirs.
Deserted, the arena waits the crowds
The shouts, the blood, the sweat, the frenzied pain!
Father in Heaven, save me from this hour,—
Death is a fearful thing, and I a Man!
Yet was I born for this my Hour, which now
Is come upon me; in the mind of God
Begotten for all time, and for one hour,
My life to be the lodestar of the world,
Pivot of human history, the Gate
Through which the generations come and go.
Their pageant weaves a thread of many hues,
Their voices sing a song of many tunes
Sounding above the murmur of the lake.
They will not know the Father but by Me.
I am the mirror of the Eternal Love.
I have drunk deep of sorrow and the tears
Of unborn children lie within my Heart,
A nest of pain. And deeper yet I drink,
The cloying dregs shall burn my thirsting tongue
Yet must I drain them.
So through Me
The ripeness of the vineyard shall be reaped.
So as the moon which draws my upward gaze
Shall I be lifted up, and men shall stare.
And men shall stare. I shall not speak, O moon,
Of love that withers nor of stars that pale;
My burning lips shall whisper words of Truth,
My glory shall not fade upon the dawn:
The dawn shall greet me with the kiss of Peace.

Mary Pearson.

TWO POEMS

BY

ARNOLD VINCENT BOWEN

Wild Pony

WHERE are you,
corn-gold,
ice-blue-
eyed, my
rose-ruddy,
dog-tooth,
dangerous
darling?
Come back, and
fan my
cheek with your
lashes,—
come back, and
bite my
fingers again.

After Eskdale

BUT yesterday, between my hands,
I cupped wild water from the hills
In those great Cumbrian lands
Where savage sunshine spills
Its lancing lights on shale and shard
Till, hued like malachite,
Each sombre, massive height
Bloomed heavenward in an air of spikenard.

No bird save one lone meadow-pipit broke
With echo frail of mortal cries
The serene, wide-spread silence of those skies
Where bleating sheep awoke
Only to deeper peace the intractable height.

Here, now, in London-smoke
So feverédly I stoke
My pipe, so thirstily drink
My glass of ale, you'd scarcely think
Twas only yesterday
I stood at Heaven's brink,
Rapt from the maelstrom of mortality,
Under those summer stars
That lighted home—so legend runs—
The shepherd-sons of Jove and Mars
Along those garths and fells
Or ever Roman reared his citadels.

ALICE MEYNELL

Born October 14, 1847

WE are separated by twenty-five years, no more, from the presence of Alice Meynell, the centenary of whose birth we keep: from her presence which, as Meredith wrote for all who remember her, gave the "flash of quiet heaven." In the year of her death, 1922, she added to the slender body of her poetry which has no date but that of birth. Yet her work to-day has a special remoteness, above that of other Victorians: it is as though her quality, marked by so fine a certainty, a finish so nearly perfect, had for us, in our unresting confusion, something hard to endure.

Her poetry and her prose must be viewed together. They are too much akin to be merely complementary, for each springs from the close harmony of her nature. In some of the early work we may admire most, perhaps, an exquisite perception of landscape and a feeling, which was always hers, for the infinite gradations and subtleties of light. But already she sees with a tender affection, a lucid discrimination, attesting the union of heart and brain. Her vision is fastidious, at times, I think, even to excess. There is something of the aesthete exploring the last refinement of sense, which links her to the 'nineties. But there is a world of difference, for her senses are subdued—yet that is the wrong word for so delighted a service—to the spirit which may rather be said to heighten and clarify them. In her later work the critical intelligence comes increasingly into action, and here again is the characteristic mark, a fine relish and discrimination which call out the strength of her emotions. We learn their range, from a deep love for her favourite poetry—and especially for the unpredictable effect of "wildness" within the strict rule of law—to a measured and formidable indignation at the tawdry, the second-hand, the false.

Alice Meynell was capable of severity, for she felt strongly and was unwavering in her loyalty to the severe standards of her making. Sometimes, when she refrained from spoken severity, her judgment, even in the happy intimacy of home, could be felt from her very withdrawal and aloofness. She had an underlying reserve, which went very deep. Solitude had a great value for her and at the heart of religion there was, I venture to think, a special solitude, which gave hidden depth and poignancy to her family love and, with more restraint, to her wider affections. Her writing is a true expression of herself: we are aware of a distance that somehow goes naturally with the tenderness of her feeling. It is a tenderness that breathes in the serious fancy of her youth and enfolds the stronger thought of her maturity, alike in its direction to one individual and, as in "Veneration of Images", to common humanity—

> Thou man, first-comer, whose wide arms entreat,
> Gather, clasp, welcome, bind,
> Lack or remember; whose warm pulses beat
> With love of thine own kind:—
>
> Unlifted for a blessing on yon sea
> Unshrined on this highway,
> O flesh, O grief, thou too shalt have our knee,
> Thou rood of every day!

In the home there was constant activity, and often high pressure, in writing for daily and other journals. But, quite apart from having to help with the finances of a growing family, Alice Meynell required the medium of prose no less than that of verse. It was not only that she had a strong critical bent: prose allowed a longer run to her imaginative thought, and freer play to change of mood. Even here she exercised a firm control and economy. She had no facility, as she confessed, for thinking in a systematic way, but her intuition had a rare flexibility. She takes her clue, and it leads her securely through the chosen maze. There is unity in the winding path, but any passage between bend and bend may have its degree of independence. The slower-witted reader is fain to linger, content with some flash of "wild" beauty, some curious and convincing truth. It is otherwise with her poetry, where the unity is held close to the centre. Sometimes she returns to an essay and regathers a few notes of thought or imagery, to transmute them into the substance of a poem. "The Spirit of Place", for example, echoing with the sound of diverse bells, allows her to travel in England, France and Italy, and not only to visit campanile and village-belfry, but to turn aside and recall humorously "some grim bells" she has known: "some grim bells, with not a single joyous note in the whole peal, so forced to hurry for a human festival, with their harshness made light of, as though the Bishop of Hereford had again been forced to dance in his boots by a merry highwayman". Afterwards the little poem "Chimes' recaptures, though with a difference of night, one melody out of many. We recognise the "dovecote-doors" of the essay—"suddenly set open to the cloud, on a *festa* morning, to let fly those soft-voiced flocks".

Again, to take a very different example, the poem "Time's Reversals" is built on a thought in the essay on Mrs. Johnson. She was twenty years older than Dr. Johnson, but he died "twelve years older than she, and so for twelve years his constant eyes had to turn backwards to dwell upon her. Time gave him a younger wife". I think that Alice Meynell slightly overstrains the significance, the oddity, of tricks that are quite in the natural dispensation of Time. The inequalities of Time fascinated her, and her treatment of them, always delicate and frequently moving, suffers now and then from an over-ingeniousness, which sometimes appears as a definite weakness in her penetrating mind. In the lines "Length of Days—To the Early Dead in Battle", the thought of the long experience of the young and the child's sense of antiquity, despite the sincerity with which it is felt, offers too ingenious a comfort. On the other hand, the perfectly phrased poem to Shakespeare, on the tercentenaries of his birth, 1864, and his death, 1916, strikes me as both beautiful and just, a masterpiece of its kind—

> Longer than thine, than thine,
> Is now my time of life; and thus thy years
> Seem to be clasped and harboured within mine.
> O how ignoble this my clasp appears!
>
> Thy unprophetic birth,
> Thy darkling death: living I might have seen
> That cradle, marked those labours, closed that earth.
> O first, O last, O infinite between!

Now that my life has shared
Thy dedicated date, O mortal, twice,
To what all-vain embrace shall be compared
My lean enclosure of thy paradise?

To ignorant arms that fold
A poet to a foolish breast? The Line,
That is not, with the world within its hold?
So, days with days, my days encompass thine.

Child, Stripling, Man—the sod.
Might I talk little language to thee, pore
On thy last silence? O thou city of God,
My waste lies after thee, and lies before.

Alice Meynell used the discipline of prose to train herself in the varied powers of language, from the sensuous value of the concourse of syllables to the precise shade of intellectual meaning and the elusive aura of suggestion. With these she sometimes deals directly: "Composure" is a tribute to the dual derivation of the English tongue, and itself provides, in the deliberate poise and rhythm of its sentences, a fine example. It contains one of those memorable sayings of which a small anthology might be made—"to possess that half of the language within which Latin heredities lurk and Romanesque allusions are at play is to possess the state and security of a dead tongue, without the death". She brought this preoccupation with the word to her more avowedly critical writing, where it both gave a strength and imposed a limit. Again and again in her examination of particular line or passage—the compelling magic or, at an opposite extreme, the ruinous bathos—she pierces with absolute precision to her mark: "plumb right", to use an expression which would have had piquancy on her lips, for with all her choiceness of phrase she would, on occasion, delight one with a touch of slang. This unerring rightness is found in the admirable essay on Tennyson, with its distinction between "the great welcome style and the little unwelcome manner". But indeed we may find it everywhere, for it is sign and seal of her quality. With it goes, not seldom, a certain shortening of perspective: the details are drawn with firmness of contour and bathed in revealing light, but something in the mass effect, felt by a less refined intelligence, appears to escape. Sometimes the reader asks for a broader and less exquisite treatment; and then he may accuse himself of ingratitude, conscious that he has been enabled to see with a clearer and more scrupulous vision than his own.

This, at least, is my experience, and, fine as is the prose, I get a fuller satisfaction from the poetry. I began this paper by referring to the remoteness of Alice Meynell's work from to-day, and there is difficulty in due appreciation even of her poems. The reason is, perhaps, that, although poetry is the natural air which she breathes, her art takes so dominating a control. Mingled with our admiration is a slight discomfort, as we feel the calculation of her firm and delicate style. Yet I think that we are wrong, and that happier generations will prove it. For the remarkable thing is that her calculation is never cold: nearly always her verses are warm with tenderness or with tempered passion. In an age less distraught than ours there should be no barrier to the acceptance of such art, and the recognition of its high place.

The later poems are those with the securest title to fame. And yet the earlier, which she herself came to view with scant favour, hold a special attraction. They are, as a rule, looser in form, and the emotion is sometimes allowed to lead the thought, though not to run away with it. "A Letter from a Girl to her own Old Age" must always remain a most moving piece, and its tones are so true a prelude to those of the mature poet as to make the letter, in a double sense, prophetic. If I single out another poem, it shall not be the well-known sonnet "Renouncement" but "Cradle-Song at Twilight", which for me silences all criticism—

The child not yet is lulled to rest.
  Too young a nurse, the slender Night
So laxly holds him to her breast
  That throbs with flight.

He plays with her, and will not sleep.
  For other playfellows she sighs;
An unmaternal fondness keep
  Her alien eyes.

Those lines have an airy magic, seeming to come uninvited from a region beyond all art. Their effect is further from the reach of explanation than the lovely late poem "A Thrush before Dawn", where we feel the art and recognise its perfection. I will quote the first stanza—

A voice peals in this end of night.
  A phrase of notes resembling stars,
Single and spiritual notes of light.
  What call they at my window-bars?
    The South, the past, the day to be,
    An ancient infelicity.

I notice, among the revisions made for the collected *Poems* of 1913, a wise deletion in two or three contexts of the word "sweet". The revisions were few, and it may be that the poet's impulse to re-touch was held in check by the impassioned protest, many years earlier, of Francis Thompson. Her taste had soon inclined towards an ascetic rule, requiring that her verse should be compact and every word should tell. An unadorned statement was sometimes to suffice her need—

"You never attained to Him". "If to attain
  Be to abide, then that may be".
"Endless the way, followed with how much pain!"
  "The way was He".

Yet, though she would never sacrifice spirit to sense, there was no diminution in her love for the sheer music of syllables, or in her feeling for the dignity of the body—"Where the high senses hold their spiritual state". It was told in the family circle that once her lines "The Rainy Summer" were read aloud in her presence—three stanzas of pure Nature-poetry, the last being this—

No scents may pause within the garden-fold;
  The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells;
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold
  Wild honey to cold cells.

She did not recognise the piece as her own, and innocently praised it, as well she might.

A keen sensuous perception always attended on her thought, and enabled her to invest it with the sudden illuminating image. Thinking of the perpetual newness of the flowing river, she can write—

> This moment's Tiber with his shining eyes
> Never saw Rome before—

and give joyous life to the saying of Heraclitus (far, no doubt, from her mind) that you "cannot step into the same river twice". She had her favourite themes, among them the intimacies of family life, the niceties of criticism, and, with a fresh approach, the great truths of Christianity. To all she brought her own original manner, constant in its regard for the half-shades of thought and feeling, and for the exact flavour—the personality, almost—of words. She is not afraid of a vast subject, but even in her boldest speculation we find the same minute precision of style. "Christ in the Universe" is a poem which faces the possibility of God's self-revelation to worlds other than ours. Its singleness and breadth only gain from a study of detail. Thus from the opening phrase, "this ambiguous earth", we may note the happy interplay of Latin and Anglo-Saxon. Then the third stanza has a characteristic sequence of epithets, each one adding its necessary stroke of meaning so that the effect is one of strict economy. Other worlds have not heard of God as the Redeemer of men—

> Of His earth-visiting feet
> None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
> The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet
> Heart-shattering secret of His way with us.

The following lines, with their "wayside planet, carrying wind and wave", have the simple note valued by Alice Meynell even beyond imagery. And running through all the seven stanzas is the knitted logic of her imagination, leading inevitably to the close—

> But in the eternities,
> Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
> A million alien Gospels, in what guise
> He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.
>
> O, be prepared, my soul!
> To read the inconceivable, to scan
> The million forms of God those stars unroll
> When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

It is a great poem, possibly her greatest, and has a finality on which this brief survey may rest.

Those who never met Alice Meynell have Sargent's pencil drawing, and some good photographs, to help their imagination. Of her face in repose they will get as fair an impression as one could reasonably ask—of the spare and delicate

contours, and of the dark eyes, though hardly of their luminous depth. They may notice, too, the poise of her head, always with some inclination to one side. She was erect of bearing, "straight as a stalk of lavender" according to a line of Coventry Patmore's. But pencil and photograph help to supplement the picture: the normal rhythm of her attitude answered to that slight inclination of the head, and there was a subtle flowing deviation of line—such a deviation as Greek sculptors of the classical period evidently found essential.

As to her manner, "gracious" is the first word that comes to me, since it has the suggestion of a great lady, with a degree of ceremony. I recall her, now with a contemplative gaze remote from the company, now easily concerned with young or old and their doings. She would be silent, and friends who knew her would feel no strain; she would speak, and they would enjoy the rare distinction and authority of her mind. The smile with which she greeted one, or approved some expression of perhaps immature views, had an indescribable radiance, seeming to enter into one's being by sympathy and affection.

The tributes of Coventry Patmore, and of George Meredith to his "Portia", will not be forgotten, and Francis Thompson raised a living monument in the glowing lines of "Love in Dian's Lap". With these the *Memoir* by Viola Meynell, a book beautifully written and wise both in reticence and revelation, will continue to be read and valued by all admirers of the essays and poems. What more can one say of Alice Meynell's character? All that I should like to say, if I had the power, is enclosed in the memory of one whose presence had a virtue beyond definition. She breathed of a spiritual world, and she brought it, close but not familiar—real and desirable—into the world of everyday.

G. Rostrevor Hamilton.

Lovers' Meeting

I WILL await you in a quiet place;
A quiet peaceful place where listening walls
May not o'erhear the pounding of my heart,
And where intrusive eyes may not behold
The warm and softly scarlet tides which stain
Those eager shores,—my love-impatient cheeks;
Nor cynic lips
Curl at the restless pacing of my feet
As the swift seconds
Crawl their laggard way
Toward a climax at the trysting hour.

Then you will come;
And all the beauty that is thereabout
Will in a moment
Merge itself into
A single note of exquisite content;—
The blossomed tree,
Songs from the feathered throats of little birds,
Tang of damp earth,
The warm touch of the sun,
Intoxicating scent of new-mown hay
Merged for an instant—or a thousand years—
Into a dream of sweet forgetfulness
Wherein the lately heavy-footed hours,
Casting aside their kindly lethargy,
Speed 'til the music of their numbering strokes
Rings out like a continuous peal of bells.

N. H. D. Spicer.

Look Once and Look Again

WE should not tempt the mermaid from the rock
on sunny days;
her hair flows golden through the sea to sand
and all her scales gleam opal through the waves
yet she is cold

But if we look again, with salt stung eyes
on stormy nights,
the mirage breaks and powders into spray,
and we on the dry beach hold a dead fish
our blood still hot.

Ursula Stuart Laird.

Stars Once Like Men

'The supplication of a dead man's hand,
Under the twinkle of a fading star . . . . .'
The Waste Land.

STARS once like men and Angels had free will
And came and went about the firmament
Unscathed, as men in cities go, and spent
Eternity in praise, and knew no ill.

They danced a dance—no quick historian
Can name it galliard, reel or rigadoon
(Though Hermes Trismegistus may have known).
I think it was a spangled, slow pavan.

Dispassionate as Angels, they had yet
Undreamed of intellect: the pride of Mars
Painted him empery over other stars.
And Lucifer smouldered by him, to abet.

The younger nebulae, on winter nights,
Recount the stellar wars, the fearful clash
Of Plough with Pleiades, the din and flash
As worlds went reeling down the aisles of light;

The horror of the outraged heavens they tell,
The sulphurous vapours loosed, the burning scum.
—And, from the constellations' martyrdom,
The sagas born, the heroic stars that fell . . .

His glittering order turned to anarchy,
The Lord of All a stern repeal enforced—
That stars henceforth should ply a given course,
Immortal worlds should know mortality.

It's said that planets stricken in their paths
Shine still, that cooled a thousand years ago
—Like the great Dead, I think, whose fiery glow
Streams down the centuries to our poor hearths.

Wrenne Jarman.

Lover in the Orchard

GAZING into the sea of blossom,
The crisp cream of apple-flowers
And the spring blush in the cherry;
I thought I could see my darling,
The cream-white fingers fluttering
Tenderly, moulding the wind's hair
In intricate plaits of sunlight;
I thought I could see my darling
Stirring ecstatic perfume
In the unseen flame of desire
That paints swallow-throats with music,
And grips the heart in its fingers.

I thought I could see my darling,
But the disappointing blossoms
Blew me soft scented kisses
As they shuddered upon departure.

Pamela Constantine (16 years)

"Look on the Fields . . ."

FIELDS of prolific gold, like seas whose waves
Foam in the wind, murmur of ultimate peace,
When the long dance shall cease
And a red sash of poppies bind in sleep
The sheaves that know no graves.

Bury the grain deep
In the heart's blood and it shall rise
In power of vision to these mortal eyes;
Implant a single seed,
It shall sustain the dreams men cherish
That flower in thought, and fruit in deed—
Sow the grain deep, it shall not perish!

Nothing is lost of all the fragments
That feed life's hunger:
And we, God's grain,
That in this earthly grove
Ripen and fall, shall rise again
To serve the need of His insatiate Love.

Wilfred Bartlett

Fama Semper Vivat!

by William Kean Seymour

THIS poet, dowered richly at his birth,
Was taught to disapprove mere shapes of earth,
Aped from Victorian plaster casts a style
Which Georgians condemned with pitying smile.

He used the sonnet, lyric, mentioned Pan
And flirted in his lighter moods a fan
Of Gallic fancy *à la* Lang and Gosse—
Always accomplished, never at a loss.

In most anthologies you saw his name
Well-docketed with little tabs of fame,
But ingrate Georgians kicked him down the stairs
With scant or no regard for his grey hairs.

He passed unhonoured, by slim volumes flanked,
Out-Squired, out-Monro'd and, in fact, our-Shank'd,
Briefly obituarised in tepid pars
Scribbled on beer-stained slips in Fleet Street bars.

Now see this other, one of his tormentors,
In turn bawled down by neo-Georgian stentors,
By Marsh remembered, by the world forgot,
One more Immortal put upon the spot.

He drew frisk lambs and catkins from the book,
Filled up from Wordsworth's pump (and stole his crook),
Learned guts from Masefield, snipped some bits of Crabbe,
A facile lyrist given to the gab.

At times he wooed the fashion's coteries
With kinked kaleidoscopic images
In half-inch fractures classical in theme—
He found he could compose them by the ream.

The *Mercury* was his, the *Saturday*,
The *Week-End* gave him space to have his say,
But Waste Land cacti pricked his fatted soul,
His axis shifted, he had missed his goal.

Yet as he watched, black envy in his eyes,
Auden and Spender and Day Lewis rise,
He tried one last trick, to divide and rule,
And put his money on the Sitwell School.

But infiltration and shock tactics won,
New editors rebuffed him, he was done;
His weeds he wore at Readings and the like
And on occasion curtseyed to the 'mike'.

He turned to 'Lives', to essays, nature stuff,
Thinking the public soon would have enough,
All tyrants pass; but thought without conviction,
And at the last he took to writing fiction.

Mark one more yet, successor to these twain,
The recent-fêted, roaring in his pain,
Too middle-Eliot, early-Auden, worse,
Out-dated tones of Spender in his verse;

Too smooth and lyrical, his juniors say,
Discrepant symbols give his mind away,
As surface-conscious as a sunstruck newt:
He read them, raging, suffered and was mute.

He that was fresh as plastic, branded old,
Barred to *Horizon*, dubbed as tinkers' gold;
In *New Verse* once unquestionably great,
Now dust beneath a new Triumvirate.

Art has its massacres no less than war.
Who now sets any satisfying store
By pride and precedence and singing fame?
Step up, you young Apollos, stake your claim,

The hour is yours, the little new Review
Is there to snatch new masters from the queue,
New Thomases, new Gascoynes, Barkers, Frasers,
As bright and blue and keen as slotted razors.

The hour is yours; step up and stake a claim.
Remember, Tennyson once had a name;
Who reads Rossetti now, or Swinburne,—who?
Step up, my lads, and start a new Review.

POETS AND PRETENDERS

WE re-open the adjourned inquest into the nature and quality of recent books of poetry, or verse, with an anthology "Home Is The Soldier" (Fortune Press, 5s.). The poems are the work of seven contemporary poets, and were written, we presume, during the latter period of the war and the early days of peace. They were described, in a foreword, as forty poems of action and attitude, of thought and talk, and the description is just. Not one of the seven contributors, however, appears to have warmed to his work. There is more evidence of a careful deployment of strong literary forces than of those more potent powers which lurk in the spirit; which is not to say that the emotions have been altogether forgotten although held very much in reserve. Thus in a memorial piece we gather that so and so's death was a sorrowful thing but we cannot feel a vicarious grief even, such is the poets' cool prosodic skill. Everything is present in this collection which goes to the making of poetry except the magic. Gifts of expression, imagination and diction are displayed with a proper restraint and mastery but whether because of the war or because the seven prefer a cooler approach to life the emotions are lacking. This is a great pity in a matter in which, unless we experience an emotional reaction we feel cheated. Only the naive can be impressed continually by evidence of human skill. The mature demand something more.

"The Voice of Merlin" by Alec Craig (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.) is as different as anything could be from his last book of verse published in 1943. That volume moved us to some condemnation both of his opinions and of his curious methods of expressing them. The present work, a long poem devoted to the Arthurian legend, variously and somewhat capriciously rhymed (or not at all), is straightforward enough, indeed pedestrian in places, and tells a plain tale with proper clarity. But one is left to wonder why it was told in verse. There are too many passages where the narrative shoulders poetry aside, and even disturbs the prosody, for it to qualify as a poem. The story is not enough to inspire us, as it was insufficient for Mr. Craig, and we cannot supply that necessary emotional response which he does nothing to evoke.

In "Moments of Time" by W. J. Strachan (Sylvan Press, 6s.) there is work of a much more acceptable kind and not only because the author has set out to make poetry for us in the classic mode but because he approaches his task in the proper mood. There is more humility and that greater sense of responsibility which flows from it in these simple poems, than in Mr. Craig's vigorous but too confident work and the result for us is a quiet pleasure, and a feeling of respect for the author. He, it is true, attempts no *tours de force*. His poems are mainly upon country themes, treated simply and with the sincerity of a lover. Mr. Strachan has however more urgent moods, and occasionally a freer style, and the following poem "Escape" is a good example of his expressive quality.

> "Pressed in the corridor of a war-time train
> Body to body, a sudden bitter rain
> Channelling the film of window-soot and grime
> Severed us from time.

And where the flooded roads had led the eye
And ochreous ploughland sang against the sky,
A dim-seen heron rising from the stream
Had the quality of a dream.

Carrying me away from mask-faces
To mountain-tops remote from ordinary places
Where I climbing in memory could forget
A world of weariness and hate.

And though the turning wheels a hope diminish
Even as I a still dear cup replenish,
I shall return to bleak, unpatterned days
That a mood remembered solaces."

A book of sonnets is something to approach with caution in the general way for it is sad but true that this verse form, and especially if it be Petrarchan, is too often a cage instead of the frame which its inventor intended. But Marjorie Tilden in "Star Crossed" (Williams and Norgate, 3s. 6d.) is most surely free in it and her sonnets read, as they should do, as easily as prose. Mr. John Cowper Powys who writes an appreciative foreword refers to the author's stark simplicity of style but we are not sure that this is not overdone, even in the interest of easy comprehension, and that more has not been lost than can be spared from a poetic form which should always evoke emotion in the reader. Miss Tilden is to our mind too matter of fact, too downright, in her sonnets, and has neglected too thoroughly the adornment of the good line and the poetic image. These things have great value in their impact on the mind, acting as a solvent to our instinctive resistance to an emotional assault. We quote a typical example; and in our view one of the best of Miss Tilden's sonnets in emotional appeal; an appeal however which does not succeed.

AWAKENED

"Why did you bring me back to loneliness?
I dreamed I talked with one but lately dead:
You brought me back to life, whose soul had fled
With her across the Styx. You could not guess
The anguish you woke—the dark distress
Of mind and heart—the overwhelming dread
Of hours to come without her. Days had sped
Like hours, and hours like minutes through the press
Of time when she was here. Her moods would change
From mirth to sadness swiftly, but how soon
The darkness was dispersed, like clouds that range
Across the smiling surface of the moon
On summer nights. How sad, how very strange
Seem these now she is gone—the night, the noon."

Very different in matter and manner is "The Hollow Vale" by James Turner (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.). Blank verse in form, it is the narrative of an inner experience, told with a rhythm which compels attention and a sincerity which holds it. The poem, for all its imagery, and its imaginative character, is

firmly and sparingly expressed, with a lack of obvious artifice which gives it, what such work so sorely needs, an authentic ring; as though the poet were in truth possessed by his own visions. The poem is in six parts, with a prologue and an epilogue, and a mere extract can never suffice for quotation. We make our selection almost at random conscious of the inadequacy.

"And those cry out for death whom death will pass
Lifting their hands for this one tiny gift,
Beseeching death to play his formal part.
Can you not see the scene? With one long stroke
All colour gone from cheeks of gentle maid
As in the arms of her beloved she clings;
And death goes on to reap a subtle crop
Of beauty, as a mower reaps
His full-head corn."

An unusual book, but most attractive, is "Poets Camera" compiled by Bryan Holme and Thomas Forman (American Studio Books, 30s.). As the price may indicate the production has all the quality of pre-war days. The photographs, and this is properly speaking a book for photographers, are superbly reproduced: the poetry selected with care from first rate and from classical sources is, by a charming inversion, only present to illustrate the work of the camera. But that is no matter. This is certainly a book to place upon a side-table, sure of its welcome by any lover of the beautiful whether of poetry or picture.

"The Hunting of the Hare" by Stephen Bracher (Williams and Norgate, 3s. 6d.) is a nostalgic account of a run with the beagles written in the Far East by a soldier while sick with malaria. It has the charm of sincerity, and in the handling of its difficult form, rhymed couplets, achieves that attractive narrative atmosphere which we have been taught to like by classical example. But a perusal of Mr. Bracher's poem reveals some lack of perfection in his prosody. The art of writing rhymed couplets is to progress continually—in this technique "filling in" is more than usually anathema. Such repetitive lines as

"The daylight faded. The dusk came on
The woods were dim, and the light was gone."

are unworthy of the author's obvious competence, and so far as we could see quite unnecessary to the sense of the particular passage in which they occurred.

A co-operative effort by four Arbroath poets, published by the local "Herald Press" at 2s. 6d. under the title "From This My Dust" deserves mention. It contains thirty poems by four friends, Alison Stewart, Elizabeth A. Whitton, John Dorward and James Crawford Milne, which are all alike distinguished by the simplicity of sincerity which those who really love poetry bring to its creation. The four contributors. in spite of their race, have written only in English and we take leave to differ from the writer of their preface who takes them to task for neglecting what he calls the Scottish tongue. They will never find a more musical vehicle for their utterance than the language of Shakespeare.

"Landfall" by Frederick B. Watt (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) offers a miscellany of moods, if little that can be called poetry, but is not entirely devoid of that magical essence. The author has it in him but is more often than not concerned with lighter

matters of a more rollicking sort, as befits a sailor. In these he displays a vigour and a lyrical capacity which are charming if not particularly important. Here is an example:

"Fog forever off the Banks,
Dust beneath the chutes,
Thick enough to fill your pores
And your ruddy boots.
Dirt ashore and dirt at sea,
Dirt by dark and day,
That is how you win a war—
Leastwise, so they say.
Up and down, and down and up,
Past Cape Sable Isle,
Past Cape Race and past Cape Spear
And earning every mile."

He has, however, a deeper note, and when he is moved by one of those emotional impulses which add beauty and significance to the words of the least of us, he speaks with a sure tongue. When this happens his technical mastery of form becomes ever more marked and adds, as it must, to his emotional power. The magical power of rhythm in any human communication is undeniable, but it is not always realised that its influence is as great on the speaker as on the listener; perhaps even greater. Its effect upon him can be actually inspirational, resulting often in the achievement of better things than the poet himself is aware of. We have no doubt that this is the case with Mr. Watt and whether or not the following passage is an example we take pleasure in quoting it. It is the first stanza of a poem commemorating H.M.S. *Weyburn* (Lost through Enemy Action):

"The only waves by Weyburn town
Surge to the seasons as they pass,
In spring the sea of prairie brown
Breaks in a quick, green surf of grass,
In summer you can feel the beat
Of mighty ground swell as the earth
Pulses its strength to eager wheat
That fills the wide horizon's girth.
Autumn comes in on flooding tide;
A million golden-ripples play
Where steadily the binders ride
(Squat paddle-steamers under way),
Till, stark against the humpbacked drift
And winter sky blown steely blue,
The lonely clumps of poplar lift
Bare poles—like schooners heaving to."

A very different volume is "Plash Mill" by Frances Bellerby (Peter Davies, 7s. 6d.), being less insistently rhymed and, although not disdaining them, freer of prosodic restraints. If Mr. Watt's work is masculine, as undoubtedly it is, then Frances Bellerby's poetry is feminine which is not to say, however, that it lacks power. She exhibits a certain literary experimentalism, but without that irritation

for the reader which that sort of enterprise sometimes entails. Her verse is unpretentious in diction, being content always with the simply adequate word, and in this the author establishes her claim to be called a poet; the insistence of the "moderns" to the contrary notwithstanding. We will quote two short verses of a little poem called *Drive Home from Hospital* which appears to us to epitomise her particular quality. This book is apparently the first volume of poems from this pen; we shall hope to see more.

"There rests the dusk-brown country
Grave and still.
What should disturb the sleeping heart
If that were all?

But trees stark-delicate as bone
And black as jet
In absolute precision stand revealed
On flaming light."

A book partly of drawings and partly of poems by Alan White called *Garlands and Ash* (Fortune Press, 8s. 6d.) seems to us to succeed better pictorially than poetically. The author was killed at Cassino at the age of 24 and it may be that the somewhat violent tone of many of his poems was due to that intense aliveness, proper to but not always found in youth, to which a friend refers on the dust-cover. The following passage from a poem called *Closer Yet* will indicate this fault sufficiently well.

"O let me clench my lips to yours,
So strangling the sound of my snivelling despair.
Bind the threads of your hair with my own,
Our eyelashes kissing in a cruciform mesh—
Where glances may be fused, melting
In tears unshed."

The effect of this kind of verbal violence is never that which is aimed at and, very likely, because so little is asked of the reader in the way of contribution to the picture from his own imagination. It is one of the worst pitfalls for the young writer that he has, as a rule, so little faith in his reader's power to co-operate with him in this way. And yet an imaginative response evoked in another should be the poet's one aim because only by its aid can he succeed. It is obvious, however, from a perusal of this book that the late Mr. White had exceptional promise and we may mourn one more bright spirit eclipsed by the perversion of mankind.

From the Wings Press, New York, comes a magnificently produced book containing many sonnets, and called *Altars to the Moon*, by Hugh Wilgus Ramsaur. It is a joy to handle such splendid paper, in spite of the inevitable nostalgic yearning which it evokes for a world which seems irretrievably lost to this side of the Atlantic. But let us not by inference denigrate what is printed upon this attractive paper; although some of the poems presented are certainly light in content and emotionally weak. It is with Mr. Ramsaur's sonnets that we are most concerned. He prefers the true Petrarchan form. One of the best of them, it seems to us, is a sonnet on The Sonnet, and while not faultless, it is by no means negligible either as a poem or as a description of this difficult form.

"A sonnet is a vessel on Thought's sea,
With eager sails that try the guiding hand,
The carven ship glides slowly from the land
And dares the Spirit's veiled immensity.
Gaining the outer channel wide and free,
The pilot casts about him to command
Such treasure as the soul may understand,
Freighting with mystic ore his argosy.

Then giving one brief, yearning look behind,
He drifts in misted revery, or takes
Another course, blown by some destined wind
From far Æolius' care until it shakes
The sea with thunder or, where white surf breaks,
Wafts to some starlit haven of the mind."

Somewhat of a novelty is a book of forty-four sonnets, published recently although written between 1911 and 1917 by the novelist Eleanor Farjeon. Its title is *First and Second Love* (Michael Joseph, 5s.). The difficulty of reviewing a book of sonnets is immense for such things are meant to be taken in small doses and a surfeit of them is likely to cloy upon even the most attentive reader. That is, of course, due to the intenser emotional note which does or ought to sound in a good sonnet, and emotion is certainly something which should be taken in small quantities. Eleanor Farjeon's sonnets have that touch of fire which makes us wish to read them at intervals and with considerate care, and if we make any criticism it is of some technical irregularity here and there. The Shakespearean form is not so difficult that liberties need to be taken with it, and the very character of the sonnet both technically and poetically forbids even small variations from prosodic perfection. Let us quote Sonnet 17 as an example of what this book has to offer. In it there is that perfection of form upon which we have insisted, and a felicitous economy of phrasing which will satisfy the most exigent ear.

"Wilt thou put seals on love because men say
Love is a thing that certain time will steal?
As well, since night is certain after day,
Might men their eyelids to the noontide seal.
Nay! even though that worn-out tale were truth,
And love, dear love, were time's assured dower,
What profit canst thou get of cheated youth
By paying usury before his hour?
I will not hear the sorry tune of time,
That bitter quencher of young blessedness.
Not to have proved young rapture was the crime,
Unproven it will be quenched no less, no less.
And thou wilt to the earth at last, time's scorn,
Relinquishing a crown thou hast not worn."

"Patriotic Poetry" is not, as Miss F. M. Venables, author of *The Ode to England and other Poems*, herself says, any longer very popular. We all love our native land but we are beginning to realise that this distracted planet is one world, and that too partisan a love is a dangerous delusion and a fatal snare. As a subject for

poetry England has inspired great work but is a somewhat inadequate inspiration for most of us. If love for one's country is an accepted virtue it nevertheless remains somewhat of an abstraction, and one which is not to be compared with more personal loves. Miss Venables has written her patriotic verses well, technically, and with as much emotional quality as her themes can provide in this discouraged age. She leaves us in no doubt of her own English character but of herself we learn little. And yet her poetry can only have real value in proportion as it becomes a self revelation.

Translations of poetry are more often than not disappointing things; but translations from the Persian, with Fitzgerald's brilliant performance with Omar Khayyam to provide a comparison, are even more likely to fall short of expectation. No doubt the original authorship of the poems translated has much to do with the matter, and these now presented by R. J. Arberry from the Persian of the late Sir Muhammad Iqbāl under the title of *The Tulip of Sinai* (David Marlow, 7s. 6d.) would not appear to have much of the quality of the Rubaiyat. Iqbāl was not a native of Persia but wrote in that language, and if the preface is to be believed attained the first rank in modern Persian literature. In translation, at all events, he lacks the magic of his illustrious forerunner and his four-line stanzas, which Omar made so familiar, inevitably suffer by comparison.

Books of poems which are sent to us by their authors with a request for notice we never ignore even when we feel constrained to be somewhat unenthusiastic in our comments. It would be unwise to deny that occasionally work which would have been acceptable to any publisher reaches us in this way, but that is not often the case and *Poems* by Eleanor Melville Metcalf is work of the lesser sort, for she has been content to exercise her talent for versification in the interest only of a descriptive power and a gentle sentiment. Of the deeper pulses of poetic creation she is either unaware or disregardful.

A copy of *Selections* 1946 (Poetry Fellowship, 1s.) has been sent to us by the publisher. This is a small booklet containing some eleven poems about which there is not a great deal to be said excepting that they are pleasant things and acceptably expressed.

A new anthology, compiled by A. F. Collins (University Tutorial Press) and called *Treasury of Modern Poetry*, should find a welcome among those who are looking for a handy compilation of poems written here and in America during the present century. There are some exceptions, chronologically, but these are near enough in character to belong properly to this age. From Emily Dickinson to Dylan Thomas might seem a long way, and indeed it is, but no doubt the latter poet is in advance of his time. To any serious student of poetry this book will be invaluable since it clarifies a matter about which there is some confusion in the public mind. The "Modern" is not so different from his forbears; and beyond a certain deliberate flatness of diction, noticeable here and there, and indulged in presumably in a spirit of independence, the prosodic conventions have not been jettisoned by even the most revolutionary.

Finally we are glad to notice an anthology sent us by our own centre at Romford, and called *An Anthology of the Seasons* (Stockwell). This sort of enterprise, whereby the work of members is collected and published as a co-operative effort, has much

to recommend it and nothing to its disfavour. The encouragement which contributors receive is of real value in deepening their determination to develop a talent for spiritual expression which is the fine flower of such civilization as we may boast of. It is impossible to overestimate the social and moral benefit to the community which would accrue to a more general desire for communication on this high plane; and it is precisely for this object that our Society exists.

Oak Leaves and Lavender by Sean O'Casey. The problem of combining poetry with dramatic art is one which has exercised the minds of creative artists since before Shakespeare, and few attempts to solve it have been truly successful. It remains the peculiar virtue of Shakespeare that in this difficult amalgamation his success was absolute and it would seem therefore that nothing less than an immortal genius suffices for so difficult a task.

The method of Shakespeare, and of very numerous others, no doubt had much to do with the difficulty which he alone fully surmounted. That method consisted in writing dramatic works in poetic form, usually blank verse, and in using language more commonly found in that form. But there is another way to effect this combination and that is the way of Sean O'Casey, and of the book under review it can be said that in the prose colloquialism of normal language he has enshrined poetry of no mean quality and in plenty, and to the actual enhancement of the dramatic quality of his work.

The scene of this play is the South Coast of England in wartime and the inventive genius of Mr. O'Casey has peopled that scene with a wealth of significant characters who, speaking their natural language, move about their business with all the reality of life; but Mr. O'Casey knows that life is or may be filled with poetry and he has seen unerringly the necessity for it in a true presentation of life, and just where and how it might be used to the enrichment of his delightful play.

H. W. Harding.

Shakespearian Emendations—No. 5

"As You Like it", II.1.43.

The 'First Lord' has just told the duke that he and Lord Amiens saw Jaques watching a wounded deer. According to the First Folio, the play proceeds as follows:

> Duke. But what said Jaques?
> Did he not moralize this spectacle?
> I. Lord. O yes, into a thousand similes.
> First, for his weeping into the needlesse streame;
> Poore Deere quoth he,thou mak'st a testament
> As worldlings doe, giving thy sum of more
> To that which he too *must*: then being there alone,
> Left and abandoned of his velvet *friend*;
> 'Tis right quoth he, thus miserie doth part
> The Fluxe of companie: anon a carelesse Heard
> Full of the pasture, jumps along by him
> And never staies to greet him: I quoth Jaques,
> Sweepe on you fat and greazie Citizens,
> 'Tis just the fashion; wherefore *doe* you looke
> Vpon that poore and broken bankrupt there?

The editions I have consulted about the above passage, are agreed that 'must' should be 'much' and 'friend' should 'friends' which shews printer's errors are in the air, yet they all pass 'do', although it cries for amendment.

As the herd were 'sweeping on', they were bound to keep looking ahead, so, had they *wanted* to do so, could not have kept their eyes on their incapacitated comrade long enough to justify Jaques requiring them to answer for their stare. As the herd did not stop and did not greet the wounded deer, they could hardly have looked less at him than they did.

For these reasons, I consider 'doe' is a misprint for 'should', which, in the copy used by the printer, may have been curtailed to 'shd'; if so, that would have made the mistake easier.

With this change, the meaning of the last six lines is clear. The poet first stated the herd swept past the wounded deer *without giving him a glance,* and then sadly enquired why his reader should think the herd callous of their comrade's plight, when 'Tis just the fashion' for men to desert *their* friends who have been overtaken by misfortune. Undoubtedly, by an error of the printer, or otherwise, Shakespeare has been made to apostrophize the deer for staring at their wounded relative, when, on the contrary, he criticized them for ignoring him.

II.7.34. As per Folio, Jaques says,

> Motley's the onely weare.—
> Jaq. O that I were a foole,
> I am ambitious for a motley coat.
> Du. Sen. Thou shalt have one.
> Jaq. It is my onely suite,—
> Invest me in my motley: Give me leave
> To speake my minde, and I will through and through
> Cleanse the foule bodie of th' infected world,
> If they will patiently receive my medicine.
> Du. Sen. Fie on thee, I can tell what thou wouldst do.
> Jaq. What, for a Counter, would I do, but good?

Du. Sen. Most mischeevous foule sin, in chiding sin:
For thou they selfe hast bene a Libertine,
As sensuall as the brutish sting it selfe,
And all th'imbossed sores, and headed evils,
That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
Would'st thou disgorge into the generall world.
Jaq. Why who cries out on pride,
That can therein taxe any private party:—
What woman in the Citie do I name.—
Who can come in, and say that I meane her,—
Or what is he of basest function,
That sayes his bravrie is not on my cost,
Thinking that I meane him,—

Thus does the duke speak to Jaques in a manner that can fittingly be described as brutal, and Jaques, instead of indignantly (and, no doubt, pungently) countering it, talks as though the duke had merely stated that, instead of cleansing 'the infected world', he (Jaques) when invested in his motley would devote himself to attacking individuals. Not only does Jaques not reply to the substance of the duke's speech, but what he does say, shews that on one point the duke said the opposite to what is recorded in the Folio; the distinction being drawn between people in general and individuals; the duke referring to the former and Jaques to the latter.

We will now proceed with further reasons, in order to prove indubitably that Shakespeare was not responsible for the Folio version of the duke's speech. Let us first consider the characters given to the two men. The duke was one of 'Nature's gentlemen', and his beneficent rule and endearing qualities were so highly esteemed, that 'three or four loving lords (one of whom was Jaques) put themselves into voluntary exile with him'; they were his 'coe-mates and brothers in exile'. Jaques was a sentimentalist from proclivity; he begged for more singing that he might 'suck melancholy' out of it, for he loved it 'better than laughing'; he was by far the most interesting personality of the duke's entourage, among whom his sayings and doings caused diversion and pleasant speculation. He monopolized the conversation of whatever company he was in, and, as in his verbal duel with Orlando, could always find an adequate retort to a gibe. He was keen to entertain the duke, as when he proposed the lord who killed the deer should be presented to him 'with the deer's horns upon his head, like a Roman conquerer'. The duke would have resolutely opposed an enemy, but would not have been discourteous to him, so it cannot be contemplated that he would, without the slightest cause, infamously slander one of his best friends. Lord Jaques, if insulted, could be relied upon to give as good as he had received. Therefore, the duke did not make the recorded speech, and, as already stated, Jaques' reply does not apply to such a speech.

There are several recorded instances of the high favour the duke accorded Jaques: when told of his moralizing over the wounded deer, he asked to be taken to him, for, said he, 'I love to cope him in these sullen fits, For then he's full of matter'. Amiens said the duke had been all day looking for him; at the opening of the scene, the duke said to him 'Why, how now, monsieur: what a life is this, That your poor friends must woo your company!' As the play is closing, Jaques is the last person to whom he spoke and than it was in an endeavour to persuade him not to go away.

From the above sketches of their characters and of the terms on which they

stood to each other, it is obvious the duke's speech is wholly corrupt, for it has been shown they were the best of friends and that Jaques had said nothing whatever to provoke the duke to insult him so outrageously. From Jaques reply it appears that the duke, instead of taking his remarks seriously, as would appear to have been the case, according to the spurious speech, bantered him on his thrice expressed desire to be attired as a professional fool; ascribing it to his fondness for dressing-up and humorously declaring that all the 'cleansing' of 'the infected world' that he would do, would be to rate various people for dressing extravagantly, thus blaming them for a failing of which he was himself a participant. Probably the duke was joking about one of the hardships of the life they were leading, for his clothing, like those of his followers, may have been worn threadbare, with little or no opportunity of obtaining new.

Line II, the Duke enquired of Jaques 'What you look merrily! It is preposterous to imagine that Shakespeare chose for his acute philosopher a man smitten by hideous disease, and should have given no hint of his condition except in this one speech, therefore (again) the speech is spurious. Such a man's lungs would not 'crow like chanticleer' with merriment. And the speech contains what appears to be an un-Shakespearian pun! From all this, it appears that Jaques' answer to the duke is authentic and the duke's speech not so. I am confident admirers of Shakespeare will be pleased with this 'new newes' from the Forest of Arden.

Cowden Clarke, Staunton, Knight, White, and Irving make no comment on the duke's speech. The Warwick says it, and Jaques reply,

> amount to an attack on, and defence of, satire. But the defence does not meet the attack. Your satire, says the Duke, will display an acquaintance with vice that will corrupt your hearers. Jaques replies that it need offend no one: it is general, and the man who takes offence only shows that the cap fits.

but, as I have shown, the duke's attack is not on satire, but upon the man who proposes to use it. It says 'the defence does not meet the attack', but I have explained that is because the attack was never made.

As is seen above, I am in agreement with the Cambridge, which says the duke's attack was a personal one. It goes on to say 'Jaques makes no reply to the Duke's personal attack, and what he says reads like an illustration to some general argument which does not appear. We suspect a 'cut' here.' But I have shown that the duke has been 'misreported': if we knew what the duke really said, we should find Jaques' following remarks were applicable to it. It then quotes Moberly "Jaques appears either *wilfully* or through *shallowness* to miss the *deep wisdom* of the Duke's saying and the whole character of his admonition.The Duke had not said that Jaques would 'offend' people, but that he would 'corrupt' them". In view of all I have said, I think we may smile at those observations.

Later in the Scene, line 168.

> Duk. Welcome: set downe your venerable burden, and let him feede.
> Orl. I thanke you most for him.
> Ad. So had you neede,
> I scarce can speake to thanke you for my selfe.

I suggest that future editions should point out that Adam's first line is addressed to Orlando and the second to the duke. The editors of my eight editions all give plenty of other Stage Directions, but not that one, so perhaps it has been thought he was speaking to Orlando throughout, but I submit such was not the case.

HOWARD PARSONS.

Dynamics of American Poetry: CXIX

"*Take Away The Darkness*" (Alfred A. Knopf) is Witter Bynner's latest book of verse. The American world invariably welcomes a book from this poet who was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1881. His is a literary background. His paternal grandfather was a newspaper editor in Worcester, Massachusetts, and his uncle Edwin Lasseter Bynner a novelist. After graduation from Harvard, he joined the staff of the "*Advocate*". Mr. Bynner became assistant editor of McClure's Magazine and at the same time literary adviser for McClure, Phillips & Company. After the success of his first book of poems, *Young Harvard* (1907), he lived for a decade in Cornish, New Hampshire, writing and publishing poetry. This was followed by a year of teaching verse-writing at the University of California. Later he travelled extensively in the Orient, particularly in China, and Chinese poetry became a great literary influence in his life. With Dr. Kiang Kang-hu he translated poems included in "*The Jade Mountain*" (1929) which made up the first volume of Chinese verse to be translated in full by an American poet. Mr. Bynner is the author of many volumes of poetry and several plays. He was president of the Poetry Society of America from 1920 to 1922. Out of the recent volume we choose the following poems.

Friendship

Staidness, a quality
I do not mean of morals
But a staying through frivolity,
Through casualness and quarrels,
A staying through the ticking clock
That lasts so long a while,
An ear-quick answer to the knock
And quiet in the smile.

Following

My shoulder followed through the sea
And over it hung the deathly moon.
I saw and said, "O can it be
That I have died so soon?"

I felt the world's remotest end,
I was borne by the moonlight clean and wide
As once I was borne by the light of a friend
To the world's end when she died.

Frederick Mortimer Clapp was born in New York City where he now lives, has travelled for many years in Europe and is the recipient of distinguished degrees. As Director of the Frick Collection in New York since 1936, he is one of the foremost personalities in the world of art. He has written seven books, three of which are verse. Robinson Jeffers writes a short appreciation in which he says, "There is no one, now Yeats is gone, whose book I await so eagerly. For sheer depth and range of thought there is no one like him in America or England".

A striking contrast we find in Langston Hughes' "*Fields Of Wonder*". Mr. Hughes has been the recipient of many prizes and awards. He was born in Joplin, Mo., and has had a most varied life. He has written poetry, short stories, articles, part of an autobiography and a play entitled "*Mulatto*" which was produced on Broadway. His poems are all short.

I could wish that readers of this review could see the arresting and delightful picture of the author on the jacket of *Overtone*, Jessie Lofgren Kraft's first book (Position Press). Mrs. Kraft comes rightfully by her talent, one gathers, since her father for years has been Dean of Fine Arts at Bethany College. She is a writer who has not travelled over the globe but has spent most of her life in her native state of Kansas. The association of the art of music and poetry is pleasant and we have an example of this in *Raindrop Prelude* (Inspired by Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 15).

Over and over I hear your name
In each drop of falling rain,
Deeper and deeper strikes the pain
Of your absence.
The fog is dense,
The night is dark,
Memories wander starved and stark,
Hours grope in wasted substance;
Within the crucible of loneliness
Hope in a faint thread of rising flame
Seeks to echo your name
And seeking, dies under the steady drip of rain.

The author's musical background colours all her lyrics.

In Robert Frost we have a writer born in San Francisco who has travelled the round of the universities but avowedly never remained for graduation in any. This fact however did not mitigate against his receiving degrees from all of them. In the realm of poetry he has four Pulitzer Prizes to his credit. He is one of the three poets to be awarded the gold medal of the National Academy of Arts and Letters. Facing this record we open his last book "*Steeple Bush*" (Henry Holt). Mr. Frost is said to believe that "a complete poem is one where an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found the words". We have all been touched in one way or another by this last terrible war which Mr. Frost has visualized so graphically in this book.

We have a delightful book *Harlequinade* (Orange Press, Winter Park, Florida), from Powell Spring who is staying in Montreux, Switzerland. *Harlequinade* opens with a series of astute definitions of humour, wit and whimsy, too good to omit in this review.

". . . Before closing let us clarify the difference between wit and humour and the much neglected whimsy. Humour is educative, wit is not. Humour is suggestive whereas wit is overt. Humour is kindly and human while wit is biting and satirical when it is not cynical and mean. Humour is delightfully lingering while wit is final. Humour has a way of smiling even through tears whereas wit tends to produce a loud guffaw which is not always agreeable to sensitive ears. In humour the heart is gay and smiling. The laugh that follows a remark which is merely witty is a stomach laugh and appeals to the digestion rather than to the heart and mind. And what about the nature of whimsy? The whimsy originates in the brain. It is thought off-guard and surprised in a playful mood. The guffaw of wit is purely intestinal in origin. In this volume Mr. Spring has clearly designed to entertain us and has done so very well in *Relativity*, to reproduce which, we regretfully cannot find the space.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

When the Red Leaves Fall

I BUILT within my heart a brave barrage
Against the autumn I had dreaded so—
Against the coming of the stealthy one,
The chill inveterate foe;

And thought to hide behind a lofty song,
Breaking this silence with memorable strains,
Against the falling of the red leaves,
And the elegy of rains.

But O the heart, the heart will not be vassal
To any song or mind when cold like this
Comes down, and dark descends where the leaves lie still
In a sodden synthesis.

But the heart must gather all its strength and might
To stand brave (if it stand at all)
When the geese fly over the lake, and the swallows shrill,
And the red leaves fall.

Blanche Robinson Williams.

The Cathedral

THE trees and glades their vestal raiment wear;
Now ends the peaceful sacrament of night.
The Day turns east and, hushed in silent prayer,
Awaits with eager wings its vernal flight.
Anthems from woodlands break; bees in their choirs
A diapason hum and birds on wing
In praise full throated chant, while dawning fires
Weave haloes in a litany of spring.

Within this calm cathedral of the morn
I stand subdued, a simple acolyte,
To hear soft tidings on the breezes borne
Telling of service till the call of night;
When God at evensong will shape my dreams
And sleep re-echo with eternal themes.

Robert Armstrong.

New Friendships

LATE was the reaping, scant the harvest's yield
And tired the gleaning hands that groped for grain,
Yet there was found a corner of the field
Where undiscovered this last sheaf had lain,
Lacking the close-drawn twine to bind it fast
With friendly ties. Alas! long-carried sheaves
Were bound by some who reaped and since have passed,
Bequeathing memories of autumn leaves.
Although the sun has set in red and gold,
Hope sees the dawning gleam of morning glory;
So with new friendships: though we love the old,
We hush expectant at an opening story.
Since Man is ever by his friendships known,
Grant from this sheaf some fruitful seed be sown!

George Cockerill.

The Worm

I SING the worm!
Deride who will:
The scorned of all,
Yet conqueror still.

Shame-synonym!
He knows to wait,
So fatal sure
His ghostly gait.

Outmarches hosts
His belly-stride
Out-tops at last
All things of pride.

Appals the heart
His blind-mouthed face,
Fore-doomed to be
Its resting place.

Sole in the dark,
Life's taper spent,
Resounds his voice
Magniloquent.

Earth's epitaph
When falls the night,
In cipher-casts
Himself will write.

Rex Clements.

Parents at a War Memorial

HE fought and fell, and came no more
But that was in some other war.

Again toward the unanswering sky
The village Cross is raised on high
Again the fast forgotten name
Adorns the dusty halls of fame.
Again the chatter, as before,
"This was the war to end all war".

We will attend the unveiling, there
With anthem and with sounding prayer
To mingle hope with doubt again
And rouse the echoes of old pain.
And presently, at close of day
When hymn and prayer have died away.
We shall remain, with hearts awing
And silent stand, remembering.

Christmas Humphreys

Song

CAIRN, castle and protecting wall
Follow their builders back to dust;
Keen sword and scabbard rest in rust;
And Time, impartial, takes them all.

And who can tell what tempting gowns
And wearers shaped which men's affairs?
Or who the saints? Time who defers
The haloes, manipulates the crowns.

Now plovers wheel above the hill
And whisper what the heart has missed;
So come, my love, we have a tryst
Time cannot reach for all his skill.

Howard Sergeant.

Sidonian Purple

JEZEBEL from her high tower
Over Jezreel looked down,
White the moon as mayflower,
Dark as ebony the town.

Beyond the town, beyond the plain,
Beyond the tribes of Israel,
Look long, look in vain,
Eyes of Tyrian Jezebel!

These are not the things of Tyre,
Here an alien people sleeps;
Here no sacrificial fire
From a crimson altar leaps.

Here is rigour and cold duty,
Trade in counting house and mart,
Here no flame to feed your beauty,
Your white breast and scarlet heart.

Here they build their temple fine
Of silver plates and cedar logs;
They have oil, corn and wine—
They will feed you to the dogs.

Jehu is a great captain,
Drives with horses four abreast,
Bands of Tyrian purple wrapped him
Round when last he took his rest.

Now he drives up through the city
Ringing round him like a bell:
Dogs and men have little pity
On the fallen, Jezebel.

Jehu feasted, splashed with red
From the trampling and the slaughter;
'Bury her fittingly', he said,
'For she is a King's daughter'.

Gather up the scattered, piecemeal
Fragments of the vase that fell
When the noon yawned over Jezreel
And the gulf for Jezebel.

T. W. Ramsey.

Cameo

(for Lesley Deane)

I SAW you come out on the stage to take your bow,
Wide swept the folds of your dress, deep and low
The slow abasement of the falling wave,
Falling, falling so noiselessly; and gave
The gathering thunder of the applause
A harbour of circled rest, a moment's pause;
And the arms of the harbour filled with the light spray
Spume of the falling petals of sound, the blaze
Of the lights was fierce upon hair and dress, and slight
As a moth you poised silenced by too much light.

T. W. Ramsey.

The Bells at Bray

LET me inform the pious reed
In the seraphic river
What pagan bells infect my head
With ill-considered fever,
What indiscreet, unhallowed creed
Converts my heart for ever.

Belfry and steeple that reprove
The idle miscreant
May not deny this Druid grove
Its heathen river-chant,
Nor save the foolish world whereof
I am inhabitant.

Alas, henceforward it will be
A waste of lover's time
To woo an infidel like me,
Seduced by song and rhyme,
Kinswoman of a melody
And mistress of a chime.

Muriel Spark.

FROM SOPHOCLES TO ANDERSON

by William Kean Seymour

A MIXED bag indeed, when Sophocles and Theocritus jostle with Boccaccio, when contemporary British, Chinese and Indian poets and writers claim the reviewer's attention! How to sort them out on the table of my mind and pick up any connecting threads is the obvious problem; and there are of course few threads, or one only perhaps, the thread of the passion and devotion for poetry and pure literature which animates all these books. The volume that has engrossed me most is Mr. Francis MacManus's biographical study of the author of the Decameron, *Boccaccio* (Sheed and Ward, 16s.). It is the latest entry in the scholarly Writers of the World Series and I find it stimulating and altogether delectable, as much for the way it is done as for its subject. Mr. MacManus modestly disclaims scholarship and acknowledges his debt to Boccaccio's numerous and brilliant editors and commentators, but if this is not scholarship when a master's mind and soul are laid bare and illuminated with chapter and verse I should like to know what is. He proceeds to a plan, to show an unsettled human soul, a genius, at war with himself in a period of transition in European civilization, at that colourful and lustful and brutal time when the Black Death was taking its dreadful toll, at "the nightfall of the Middle Ages". This first of European storytellers, who stamped the *ottava rima* on the poetic technique of succeeding centuries, was not only the accomplished spinner of tales of gallantry, he was a poet who aspired to the austerities of Dante. Poem after poem, as Mr. MacManus demonstrates, shows his allegiance to the great Florentine who died in exile in Ravenna when Boccaccio was about eight years old. Each had one woman paramountly in his life, Dante his Beatrice and Boccaccio his Maria d'Aquino (Fiammetta, his Little Flame), but there the parallel of devotion and inspiration ends, for Boccaccio could never rise to the Dantean conception of ideal love: for him women were creatures for men's use and amusement, and, however finely his poetic fancy starts, the elements of amorous and earthy comedy soon dominate his muse, he remains indelibly the Neapolitan gallant, the celebrator of tedious infidelities in formal gardens. In the autumn of his life he found his *metier* as a superb teller of prose tales, and by these he ranks with Chaucer, Rabelais and the authors of the Thousand and One Nights.

Two famous translators of classical verse are responsible for the renderings from the Greek ancients which follow. Professor Gilbert Murray's rhyming version of Sophocles' "The Women of Trachis", which he elects to call *The Wife of Heracles* (Allen & Unwin, 5s.), has all the Murray qualities of smooth lilt and romantic feeling which we associate with his versions of the plays of Euripides. The dramatic picture of Heracles' wife as presented by Sophocles must, I think, have appealed powerfully to Dr. Murray, for Deianira is one of the finest of Sophocles' creations. Her voice speaks out of the clouded centuries:

> "I sat unseeing, trembling, lest for me
> The gift of beauty mean but misery.
> Howbeit, the God of Battles made that strife
> End well . . . if well it be. Being chosen wife

To Heracles, still fear on fear doth press
Round me, amid his perils comfortless.
If night brings rest from pain, new pains and more
Wake in the night. The children that I bore
He scarce hath seen, like one who hath a plot
Of land o'er seas he knows not, visits not,
Save once perchance to reap and once to sow."

And from this charged atmosphere of tragedy we may turn to Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's *A Translation of the Idylls of Theocritus* (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.) which, apart from being a very scholarly and faithful rendering—at times in prose, when he felt an attempt in verse would be unsatisfactory—is of great prosodical interest. He uses an unrhymed verse of seven accents with most attractive effect:

"Sweet is the whispering music of yonder pine that sings
Over the water-brooks, and sweet the melody of your pipe,
Dear goatherd. After Pan, the second prize you'll bear away."

Throughout this treasurable little book the sensitive reader must feel the enthusiasm of a modern scholar giving himself completely in enjoyment of poetry that has delighted countless generations:

"Such a draught as ye Nymphs that day made stream for us beside
Harvest Demeter's altar, upon whose mound of corn
May it be mine once more to plant the great fan, while she sits
And smiles upon us, holding sheaves and poppies in each hand."

By a happy coincidence of delivery I have also another book of Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's before me. *From the Shiffolds* (Hogarth Press, 5s.) contains a number of translated fragments from Greek and Roman authors, but in the main it is a volume of Mr. Trevelyan's own poems, and reading we recognise why this poet is attracted to the leisured loveliness of the ancients. For him, as for Theocritus, the woods and fields, youth and enthusiasm, have an overmastering and constant appeal: and like Theocritus he uses the idiom of contemporary delight and the sense of wonder to express himself in celebration of the visible world:

"Some pool in the rocks left brimful by the tide,
Through whose pellucid twilight
One gazed down into a magic paradise
Paven with fine sand, delicate shells and corals,
Peopled with tiny fishes,
Transparent shrimps, great prawns and sidling crablets
Lurking among rich groves of feathery seaweed;
And clinging to the rocky walls
Plumed anemones, crimson and green and brown."

That is complete, a poem called "A Memory"; not great poetry, but in its power of suggestion as perfect as a phrase of Debussy.

The next three volumes to be considered take us at a bound to the East, to India and China. We hear so much about the political, social, military and economic aspects of these great territories that it is good to be reminded of the creative flame in their young writers. From India come two anthologies edited by Dr. V. N. Bhushan, a Professor of English in Wadia College, Poona. *The Peacock Lute* (Padma

Publications, Bombay, 7s. 6d.) is a collection of poems in English by thirty-five Indian writers. *The Moving Finger* (Padma Publications, Bombay, 10s.) is an anthology of essays in literary and aesthetic criticism by seventeen Indian writers. And let me say at once that of the two books I prefer the prose collection. Aesthetics have a proper place in literary criticism, and some of these essays are extremely well done, *e.g.*, Professor Bhushan's exhaustive comparison of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* (in Fitzgerald's version) with Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and Dr. Amaranatha Jha's closely reasoned and sympathetic analysis of Kipling's poetry, which is a most significant pointer to the Westernization of the cultured Indian mind:

> "The words look trivial, but they sound true: the form is rough but conceals fine art: and more than all, the message is one to which we shall respond more and more, and feel that here is the authentic voice of our century—finding no comfort in thought of God, seeing much misery and disgrace, but withal holding to the anchor, pointing the way to Light and bidding us have hope, for some there still are that do not shame their kind, not even with that wind blowing and that tide!"

Essays on Shelley, Shakespeare, Rossetti and Donne show how deeply integral to modern India literary thought is the English poetic tradition. But when I turn to *The Peacock Lute* I do not get a like measure of satisfaction. Perhaps it is because these Indian poets, writing in English, have too closely assimilated the external form, the language of the poetic stream with which they seek to identify themselves. Their spirits, I feel, are wearing unaccustomed vestments, and because they aspire to wear them correctly they appear formal and self-conscious. When Sri Aurobindo cries:

> "With wind and the weather beating around me
> Up to the hill and the moorland I go.
> Who will come with me? Who will climb with me?
> Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?"

I feel he is just aping the heartiness of the Scottish Students' Song Book; and when the late Mr. Umamaheshwar writes:

> "I built a dome of coloured dreams,
> And Hope's red radiance rayed around . . ."

I think distantly of Shelley and Coleridge and wish for something more individual and Indian in his utterance. Amid so much that is cultured and innocuous in this collection of Indo-English poetry I unaffectedly welcome the Indian MacNeice of the collection, Mr. P. R. Kaikini. Well may his editor call him a "new voice in Indo-English poetry", for he certainly brings a wind of stinging satire among the pastel landscapes of Tagore and Mrs. Naidu. And I welcome too Mr. Krishnamurti (not the late Mrs. Besant's protege) for one definitely *Indian* poem on the subject of the Untouchables:

> "God pity our souls and forgive us our crime,
> That have trodden like filth on a fellow-folk;
> God pity our souls and revoke his doom
> That condemned us to bear the stranger's yoke."

If there were more poems of this quality in Dr. Bhushan's anthology and less poetic ornamentation the book would be of great value, but most of it comes into

the category of emotionalised minor verse of the kind we associate with adolescence. Yet, saying that, I must remember that these poets are Indians using a foster tongue and that, for this reason alone if for no other, the collection is a milestone on the road of understanding and progress.

In the case of Chinese poetry the average English student thinks inevitably of those rare and economical little gems of evocation and description from the ancient Chinese in Mr. Arthur Waley's renderings. But the moderns, our contemporaries in China, are so utterly different that, reading them, we have to forget all we ever knew. The new anthology of *Contemporary Chinese Poetry*, Edited with an Introduction by Mr. Robert Payne (Routledge, 10s. 6d.) will come with a shock of surprise to most readers, for here, in this carefully selected introduction to the work of nine poets we see, as the Preface truly says, "nearly all of the ancient poetic traditions cast aside" and a revelation of "the brutality, power and honesty of the new poetry which is being produced to-day." There are war poems of the agony of China here. Consider this quotation from Ai Ching's "The Hospital":

"The days passed, the days passed.
Each day was a procession of black coffins.
In such a place
The pain of each one
Was no less than another's.
With the only lives we ever possessed
We held back the enemy's advance,
We met their fierce fire,
We shed our blood
For the sake of the place we were guarding.
To-day, lying in bed, lying down,
They said to us: It is all to your honour.
We had no need of honour.
We were ill, and we remembered the battlefield . . .
But to-day we are shackled beasts
Chained to iron bedsteads.
We wait, we wait.
Will there ever be an end?"

Tien Chien's poetry has a similar white-hot searing quality, comparable with Wilfred Owen's and Seigfried Sassoon's in the first World War. But if I ask myself what it is that makes Mr. Payne's collection so much more significant than the Indian one I think it must be because the poems, though translated into English by Chinese, were written in the mother tongue. There is thus no impingement of alien moods and conventions. They were translated by scholars, often poets themselves, but they were not written for Western eyes and ears. It is indeed a remarkable collection and for his choice and Introduction Mr. Payne makes us his debtors.

Returning to English poets I acknowledge a volume of unusual experiment, *The Cosmic Shape*, by Ross Nichols and James Kirkup (The Forge Press, 8s. 6d.) which is described as an interpretation of Myth and Legend and is written alternately in prose and verse. I am always a little doubtful of joint statements of intentions when poets get together, but these writers seem to have no axes of Movements and Tendencies to grind and if they are happy in publishing their conclusions and

interpretations of Myth and Legend while presenting their poems nobody can possibly object. I am concerned with the poems presented and in Messrs. Nichols and Kirkup we have two very good incantatory poets, each with an enlarged sense of wonder and possessed with lyrical passion. Of the two James Kirkup is the better poet, but if my readers can imagine the young Keats in a phase of surrealism they have a rough measure of these two most promising writers.

I come to the most mature and best-equipped English poet on my list, Mr. John Redwood Anderson. He is represented by two volumes, *The Fugue of Time* (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.) and *Paris Symphony*, with a Foreword by John Cowper Powys (Harrap, 6s.). For many years I possessed a paper-bound brochure of poems by Mr. Redwood Anderson (published, I think, by Arrowsmith) which manifested the promise he has so abundantly fulfilled. It was young, it was lyrical and elegiac, and I lost it in the 1940 bombing: but I wish I had it by me for comparison with these latest volumes. Time has deepened this poet; fundamental brainwork is evident on each page; like Hardy and Meredith (lyrical poets both) he strives and reaches towards a meaning of himself and of existence, expressed with the sombre jubilation of *I am, and I am that I am* which is the first poem in the *Fugue* and which is a thought-phrase repeated—that God is the projection of man's own godhead, "the face of my own Pity deified", the new old thought of man's redemption by man, "the last validity of Nature." This *Fugue* is both pantheistic and ethical and it is all borne along on a lyrical tide of the free rhymed ode, at times cool and slow and imagistic, then tender and emotional and then mounting in a passion of rhetoric. It is a poem sequence to be read many times, and always, in my case, with a delighted awareness of the strength and compass of this poet's inspiration and verse technique. And so, too, is the *Paris Symphony*, wherein there is never a rhyme but the whole has an air of intellectual music, the music of Mr. Anderson's own description of Aphrodite:

"Unintellectual,
still, cold perfection,
brow of all certitude,
eyes of blind beauty,
And lips of peace."

The theme is the music and the music the theme—human life mastering itself in the striving towards perfection, mastering and failing, striving and retreating. It is a conception of audacious grandeur and one which man's history affirms and denies. In Mr. Anderson's verse it rises to the heights of great poetry. And indeed these two books make a strong bid for the attention of posterity.

The Criminal

CATCH him, coop him, wash your hands,
Make a record of it;
He is immured and you assured
Of honest sleep and profit.

Free, he bore alone the stone
That built his private prison;
Condemned, confined, he frees his mind
Of its oppressive reason,

And penned and paying casts his load
Upon the free who walk
And stumble on the thorny road
Of innocence, who break

The holy laws of kindliness
And button up their pockets,
Who sin with law-books in their hands
And Christ in golden lockets.

The blot that clotted in his blood
Is purged, the stain made common,
The guilt we never understood
Delivers its mass summons.

The stocks, the pillory, the gaol
Our public scapegoats tether,
A communal confessional
The dock and pew together.

Let us while praying that we may
Not pay like other men,
Remember that we help defray
The cost of killing them;

Feeling on our shoulders fall
A sliver of the cross,
And round our hymning throttles coil
A strand of hempen noose.

W. P. Yates.

The New Year

OTO give the world peace!
One day I shall have the dawn at my fingertips
And with rose I shall cover the earth,
and resurrect flowers
In tight buds of light. I shall come
And find the world Peace,
Bathe her brow with our prayers murmured,
And she, like a snowbird, fired with happiness,
Will sprinkle a Time of Smiles everywhere;
I shall give the world Peace",
Said the New Year.

Says the Old
"I would give the world Peace,
From my barren beginning I swore it,
I would place crowns of plenty on poor heads,
And lift up the sunshine into Heaven.
. . . And I looked for Peace, but she never came.
Now that my peacock eyes are filled with dread
I know there's no Peace. She died a war ago".
Said the New,
"I shall resurrect her,
Out of the flames of desire and love I will mould her;
Courage shall be her eyes, her hair beauty,
Her lips Tomorrow; and Youth shall be her brain.
You are weary with days; drop them;
You have plucked barren months, I shall pluck gold.
I am not afraid; I shall pick up the Faith
And I shall find the world Peace".

The New Year came in, the Old departed
On the ship of December. There was a band of voices
Singing the stars away and the dew awake;
It was a band of children.
The New Year smiled
For the song was to Glory. "They shall find Peace", he said.

Pamela Constantine (16 years).

To Catharine (reading verse)

THE lamp burns in the bowl;
Weightless, the bud upon the leaf
Moves and is moved: quietly the soul
Perfects the mind's adventure.

The lamp burns: unhurrying feed
The wicks of fancy; lids and lips and fingers
Droop on repose: your every stillness stills;
I am deep-emptied, drained by calm that fills
Even your body stirring: you are light
Wherein the candle of my transcience dies.

The bud moves:—to the rise,
The fall, of breathing thought; your spirit's flower,
High-cradled in the boughs of time,
Is nursed by the imponderable.

Lovely the look
You send across your book,
As though you touch me with the wand of rhyme
Not for my binding but redemption . . . .
Might I too
Lie pulseless in the leaf of dreams
The ethereal rocking me. And echo answers:
Might I, broken through
The moon-caught gossamer of substance, find
New day behind,
The fire unclothed, the blossom set
In wind tracks of the eternal. On your hand
Dusk is a silken glove—you smoothe a page,
And beauty's impress changes in your hair
To dusk: how should you understand?
Life is its own long shadow; I myself
Shut out the dawn I crave. Yet, watching there
Your sidebent head, the curl that goes
A-gleam between your temple and your cheek's
Night-tinctured rose,
I would not ask a sign,
But take these, in their loveliness
A universe, for mine
Until their solace fails . . . . . O happiest, then
Turn me that sunlit, grieving glance again.

The lamp burns in the bowl;
Weightless, the bud upon the leaf
Moves and is moved: quietly the soul
Perfects the mind's adventure.

D. Freeman Larkin.

(We learn with regret that this contributor died on 4th July last.)

Dusketha Speaks of the Death of Cyrano de Bergerac

I am she whose life-blood flows through the veins
Of the forest,
And whose bones hold the secret of ages
In rock:
Dusketha.
One called my name.
It was the weeping of the ancient oak
That made me lift my dreamless orbs into the dusk,
And, as the twilight leaves trembled and drifted down,
A soft mist rose
As if to hush the entranced spirits of the air;
The spectral moon, with her immeasurable lament,
Touched the pale face that smiled . . . . .

Gone are the long-drawn clouds that failed,
For all their loneliness,
To shade the light of inextinguishable blood:
For the soul in the human veins
Is a sun that never grows old.

And so the figure, seated in his gnarled chair,
Spoke on:
His voice, a distant roar of cataracts,
Flowed, as through vales of unimagined dreams,
Upon the night, flooding the gloom with sound.
The haunted silence trembled as it heard,
For purer than the Sirens' song,
This voice rose up beyond the Firmament
And the wild stars hushed their phantom tune.
There was no counterpoint except the weeping of a rose.

I speak of Cyrano de Bergerac,
Of him who came across the arid sands of grief,
Yet looked not on what barren ground he trod,
Lighted by his panache.
No words can draw an image
Of the colossal splendour in his face,
But the vast night and she, Roxane,
Whose lucent eyes spoke of a long lament,
Watched this unwearied figuration of humanity
Pause between life and death.
His face was turned up to the evening sky:
A face that smiled beyond his agony;
His eyes were past all weeping as he gazed;
And his prodigious nose, a thin cold bone,
No longer was grotesque

For his huge soul had triumphed over all.
I felt his hand on my arboreal limb.
It was a column of golden fire,
For the blood that coursed through his fingers—
The soul's transmuting instrument,—
Had become spirit.

I have taken many by the hand
When the elegy of the year
Is blown from an unseen horn.
They who come to me sheltering their eyes
Are colder than a bone of moon:
For he who shrinks from the earth
Will find an everlasting darkness in my eyes—
Ill-starred and doomed.
Yet he who is beloved, and loves and hopes,
Touches me with a breath from Salamander's soul.
The blood, that shouts through the veins of man,
And throbs in his heart with a rhythm more terrible
Than the revolutions of the heavens,
Pours into my bosom and rests in a golden ocean
Until the spring.

Thetis Blacker.

Mariage à la Mode

WHO shall a sonnet sing of love
With fourteen strings to weave his tune?
When thirty days alone hath June
And these too few for lovers prove.

No matter how my fingers move
To pluck me notes to match the moon,
My gamut falters far too soon
And he outsings me far above.

Though in my throat a mating dove
Craves love's unutterable boon,
I can but sing as marsh-frogs croon
For which no maid yet dropped a glove.

Ask not for songs then, you that clove
A heart that thought itself immune;
Take from my mouth the silver spoon
Despoil my purse of treasure-trove.

For I who sonnets vainly wove
Wherewith your smile to importune,
Must with a golden chain dragoon
The captive flesh and bones of love.

H. W. Harding.

Six Men

BUT yesterday they were six men
Walking the greensward fair;
To-day they lie six clods of earth
Wind-swept, with bodies bare.

The grasses waving over them
Make no disturbing sound;
Their lives ebbed out in little gusts
Upon the leaf-strewn ground.

The dark, red welter of the fight
Is past, and now they lie,
Sleeping the last long sleep of all
Pale faces to the sky;

And one is young with unlined brow,
And one, is tough and old;
And one has eyes like mountain tarns
Beneath the sunset's gold.

And mud and blood have ravaged them,
And horror scored its mark:
But they will rest a long time now
Within the peaceful dark.

The night falls gently on them there,
The stars look down— the rain
Like some sweet pitying mother wipes
Their faces clean again.

Beryl M. Davies.

Astrology

WE know that unseen radiance
Falls on our bodies from on high
And penetrates humanity
With subtle mystic influence.

But rays that on the mother fell
Thrilled through the unborn child as well
From the first moment it began
From her to borrow mould of man:
So Reason can ignore with scorn
The second when the babe was born.

Nor ask what paltry planets stood
Where in the heavenly multitude:
Weighed with the Kings of awful space
Those atoms are but grains of sand
On some immeasurable strand
Or dust upon the desert's face.

Edward Vandermere Fleming.

The Spinner

ALONE and unfriended,
In the eve-dusking room,
There sits the silent one,
Turning his loom.

Treadling his aery wheel,
So still he seems,
Spinning his web of song,
Weaving his dreams.

The irised warp
Blends with the aureate woof,
The speeding shadows sweep
The candled roof.

Conjuring the heart
Of summer's rain,
Of fretted frost
Upon the window-pane.

Keeping eoan tryst
In the close-curtained night,
Catching from fantasy
Beauty and light.

He seeks love's thread,
The quintessential hue,
The strand that snaps and breaks
The spool of rue.

With ego gall'd, remote,
His gossamers roll,
Transmuting in damask
His latent soul.

And while his spindles turn
A frill of tears,
Rejected skeins immew
His fabric fears.

He fills his hands
With satins and brocades,
Broidered with fabled blooms
From moon-spilt glades.

Spring's posturing trees,
All blossom-lit and sweet,
In purfled miniature
Sprawl at his feet.

Twilled, purled and pleached, with shades
From Nature's palette ta'en,
Amphigory drapes his loom:
He starts again.

Prentice and postulant,
Euterpe's neophyte,
Melpomene's tragic priest,
Erato's wight.

What ecstasy goads him
To seek his patron's boon?
None but his kin can read
That magic rune.

Alone and unfriended,
In the dawn-pearling room,
Spreading the silent shroud
Over his loom,

There goes the wearied one,
Haunted, unspent,
Leaving his gods to keep
His mystic sacrament.

Thomas Morgan McGurk.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The danger of uncritical acceptance of experimental poetry because it is new or unusual was pointed out by a Texan, Mr. David Russell, in the May-June issue of *The Poetry Review*. That he should have chosen the pages of this review for his pronouncement is perhaps more significant than would appear at first glance. I wonder whether Mr. Russell is aware of the fact that *The Poetry Review*, as early as 1913, thirty-four years ago, based its editorial policy on the very points which he mentions.

When the literary editorship of the *Review* passed to the steady grasp of Stephen Phillips, the new attitude was explained on the first page of the January, 1913 issue:

> *The Poetry Review* in its present form is in no way intended as a medium for the exploitation of unknown versifiers. By this is not meant that we wish to print merely the verse or articles of poets and critics of wide and acknowledged standing, though we respectfully invite their co-operation .... Our object is to print—so far as poetry is concerned—what seems to us good, whether it come from a known or unknown pen. Let the singing be full-throated and from any bush ...

And although the immediate purpose of the statement was to repudiate the unrestrained experimentalism and "modernism" of the previous editor, it has lost none of its applicability over the years and serves to reinforce the words of Mr. Russell.

He decries the cult of unintelligibility which is responsible for a "personalized code language in which the poet can speak only to himself, or in which the members of a small group can speak only to each other ..." In 1913, *The Poetry Review* was insisting over and over again that

> Poetry is not the sole concern of a few, and anything that suggests it is a thing apart, an eclectic preserve, a specialized art or business, does an injury to poetry and is a slight on humanity.

The men who shaped the policy of the *Review* in 1913 were deeply concerned, just as Mr. Russell is, with the condition of "modern" poetry, suspicious of its bizarre experiments, its *tour de force* qualities, which had little to offer the average intelligent reader except bewilderment and noise. "Nor are we inclined at all", said Phillips, "to listen to the cry to be modern. This cry is almost always in the mouth of absolute youth". And they, like our contemporary critic, felt that a return to universal song was the only way to reconcile the poet with the public at large. They asked for renewed attention to English poetic tradition, and they sought an admission that the poets of the present had something to learn from the poets of the past:

> It is debatable whether these wandering sheep (average readers) will pass into the fold of the elect if the pipes of the shepherds are entirely twentieth century reeds. They are more likely to be lured into barren stony ground and to be lost in sandy deserts ...

This accumulation of similarities in the points of view of the early *Poetry Review* and the present head of The Poetry Society of Texas is, if nothing else, interesting.

I think, however, that it illustrates beautifully striking parallels in twentieth century literary criticism which are perhaps too obvious to require discussion. Mr. Phillips had in mind, when he cautioned restraint, the lunatic fringe of wild-eyed poets, some of whom eventually became associated with the Imagist and Georgian "schools". Mr. Russell is thinking perhaps of outlandish attempts during the past score of years to make elaborate novelty in verse substitute for true poetic inspiration, a situation which, in the words of Alfred Noyes, has earned the "contempt of the man in the street for all poetry". The lessons learned from too ready acceptance in the past of the merely unusual and esoteric should give the modern reader and critic pause. New writing deserves careful and sympathetic criticism, but the note of sensible restraint struck in the early days of the *Review* and reiterated by Mr. Russell is convincing and healthy.

Shakespeare Avenue, New York. MARVIN MAGALANER.

Has not the term "modern" as applied to poetry changed in meaning? Writing of the true moderns Mr. Russell observed in his letter: "The younger poets . . . . are moving into the post-war period with a clearer understanding of the true function of poetry".—*Editor.*

The Reviewer writes:

Miss Marie Stopes' letter published in the July/August number of this journal (P.300)—reveals some acerbity at my review of her recent book "*The Bathe*" in the issue of March/April. With some lack of pertinence, which balances perhaps some impertinence elsewhere in her letter, she quotes Mr. De la Mare against me, but the remarks of this eminent poet do not in fact traverse those of which I was guilty. Indeed I said much the same thing, if much less eloquently, and if I was not so impressed as he with this particular poem I have his own views on poetry in general to support and reassure me. That view, personally conveyed, was that any poem, except perhaps the greatest, must appeal differently to different people —that one man's meat might well be another's poison.

The case here is not nearly so uncompromising, but Mr. De la Mare will certainly not be so surprised as Miss Marie Stopes at my criticism of her poem.

It may be that I was in this case more concerned than Mr. De la Mare with the emotional content in "*The Bathe*", and I ventured to suggest that its theme was too humdrum for a moving result. I still think this, and the more so since I am well aware that Miss Stopes is capable of giving me a most satisfying spiritual experience when she is moved by a worthier theme.

Whether or not I have, in Miss Marie Stopes' phrase, ever bathed in perfection (whatever that may mean), from Brighton beach or elsewhere, is really beside the point. Bodily pleasures, however delightful, are unlikely to provide an adequate poetic impulse. For that a deeper spiritual excitation is surely necessary as my critic herself proved so well with her lovely commemorative poem for a dead young naval officer. I do not think I was more perceptive in my decided praise of that poem than I was in my qualified approval of this new one.

(The Editor regrets that Miss Marie Stopes' letter was not shown to the Reviewer in time for him to reply to it in the July/August number).

It is with very great regret that I find myself in partial opposition to the views expressed by the Premium Editor on the matter of poetic contractions—for he appears to confound the unfortunate "*He's*" and "*I'lls*" of the less gifted of his competition entrants with the many delicate contractions used by the dignified British poets, of all time when writing on classical or romantic subjects. In the use of the contractions of *oft, o'er, e'er, e'en,* and the like there is an obvious embellishment in the lines by the supplying of an atmosphere not always to be found in the longer words from which they were derived. This is doubtless through their long association with fine verse, even if they were also once the speech of common men. Of course there are many poems in which the use of these word-contractions would be unsuitable, but if their use were to be debarred entirely from poems of an old-world flavour the poets who wrote them would be robbed of much of their natural inheritance and rightful armoury. For the great poets never used these words in any "slipshod" fashion, but they were the deliberate performances of effective presentation, exactly in the manner that Spenser gave us a whole glossary of words to enrich the language of his *Faerie Queene* and other poems and recapture the atmosphere of romance, which he felt his own age and its simpler language could never give him. I must beg respectfully to differ also on the matter of the invariable exact rhyme and piston-driven prosodical precision as the last word in the poet's curriculum. Surely this is an error. Professor Hartley tells us that "rhyme may be *perfect* (long-song, etc); *imperfect* (jove-above, etc.); or *false* (take track, etc)., and he imples no shame in the use of the two letter forms when necessary. Indeed a surprisingly fine effect can be obtained by the occasional use of the *imperfect* rhyme, such as *led-hid,* for it breaks a little the machine-like monotony of the invariable exact rhyming. On the question of metre the iambic pentametor or Heroic verse can sometimes be altered and even improved by the admission of another syllable in the middle of the line, and again by the well-known twelve syllable iambics—the Alexandrines at the close or a division in the poem. Professor Hartley goes on to say "of how little importance is the regular number of feet or syllables to the poet with *a true ear for the melody of verse* is seen in the exquisitely melodious and spirited passages which abound in the irregular verse of Byron, Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott". The delicate ear of the artist is to decide when such a deviation is desirable and when it is not. Surely this is as it should be. The poet who made his tools can also change them, or even for a moment lay them down.

Clifford, Hereford. ARTHUR ROW, F.R.S.A., M.R.S.L.

The Premium Editor replies:—

I do not find myself in even partial opposition to Mr. Rowe in respect of the views which he expresses above excepting as these refer to myself. I do not confound the unfortunate "He's" and "I'lls" of my less gifted competitors with the classical "oft, o'er, e'er, and e'en" when I roundly condemn the use of both classes of abbreviation. The first class obviously has no classical patina and might therefore be considered uglier than those in the second group but these latter incur my disapproval too although for a different reason. That reason is that they are archaic and run counter to our modern fashion. The circumstance that the modern poet uses them because of metrical difficulty and never so far as I can see

like Mr. Rowe who uses them because he loves them and believes them to confer an added beauty, is another reason why I object to them.

But Mr. Rowe and I could go on disputing forever on this matter and getting no nearer to agreement. We must therefore agree to differ.

But there is another matter to which he refers where he has misunderstood my position. I have never insisted upon what he phrases as "invariable exact rhyme" nor upon "piston-driven prosodical precision". These are Mr. Rowe's words and his exaggerations. My views on these matters are sufficiently familiar already to need no restatement. On rhyme words, they are that the word itself should be absolutely essential to sense and just in its application; that it should never be a filler nor imported into the poem for any reason whatever than its indispensability. I have no other views about rhyme and certainly as great a love of near rhyme as himself. In this review he will find some in a poem of my own.

In regard to prosodic rhythm my views are also the same as Mr. Rowe's. I object to "tumpty-tum" as much as he. One of my earliest impressions in poetry was Pope's defence of those who snatched a grace beyond the reach of art. Mr. Rowe will know without my telling him that a perfectly exact metre may be varied almost indefinitely by the use of iambics and even by half-beats. I do not object to them; I use them, and certainly I have never reproved any poet for them.

The position of the poet in society has forever been a difficult one. The reason is not hard to discover; he who possesses the attributes of a metaphysician becomes too often a humiliating companion. The brighter his vision, the more apt is he to criticise, to define, and to condemn. Custom he ridicules, habit he disdains, but with the luxury of revelation forms his own scale of values and has little reverence for those of another authority. A poet will wound his comrade with the unerring word, sharp as a sabre; he will probe the heart of logic and tear it with judgment springing from another element than reason. When the world weeps he will be discovered laughing, and when men are gay will entertain sorrow as a much-loved guest.

So vigorous is the imagination of the poet that all his energies are imprisoned therein, and we are unfortunately swift to mock his outward inertia. The modern philosopher, like the prophet of old time, is condemned in his own country not only because he lacks temporal concentration, but because his prophecies so frequently deride all that civilization holds essential. His annunciation of the validity of love is regarded as effeminate, and if that love were—as the film-goer is happy to believe—a mere eccentricity of the courtesan, such an accusation would be well-deserved. But it is not so. The love of the poet is also the love of Christ: though in a lesser degree, it enjoys the same universality and the same compassion. Even a bad poet is above all a creator, and as such must be aware that life and love are indivisible. He grasps this truth, and with the gift of tongues endeavours to reveal it to everyman, recognising neither race not frontier.

His is an intricate vocation demanding the most esoteric idealism, the strongest integrity. Like the diamond, truth is brilliant and has many facets, but like the diamond also is both hard and deep. Who, having once appraised its loveliness, would count himself satisfied with any common jewel? Who, having once discovered absolute reality, would rest contented with a lesser prize?

Let us therefore have patience with the poet. For in our grosser ways we follow the same perfection, differing only in that we move with so much less alacrity, tempering our progress with oscillation and with fear.

Cholley Wood. JEAN KENWARD.

Felicitous Phrases

The following comprehensive list, has been received from Nancy Pollok, Tettenhall, Staffs. (*vide May-June*, 1947, POETRY REVIEW).

Ezra Pound: ". . . The obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze", from *pour l'Election de son Sepulchre.*
Selected Poems.

T. S. Eliot :

"One who has eighty years and no to-morrow", from *A Song for Simeon.*
"The pain of living and the drug of dreams", from *Animula.* Collected Poems.

Herbert Read : ". . . The white ecstasy of intellect", from *Hulk.* Thirty-five Poems.

W. H. Auden :

"The expansive moments of restricted lives
In the lighted inn", from *Chorus* 1: *The Two.*
"The dangerous flood
Of history", from *August for the People.*

Edmund Blunden :

"Pleasant as voices heard from days long done" from *Thames Gulls.*
"Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom", from *Almswomen.*

W. J. Turner :

". . . The thin silver soul of the stars", from *A Ritual Dance.*
"And there was music carven in his face", from *Ecstasy.*

Sylvia Lynd :

". . . Scarlet currants that appear
Like earrings in a lady's ear", from *Farewell in February.*

Frank Kendon: "The enormous dreams
Of trees upon the undulating water", from *The Backwater.*

Siegfried Sassoon :

" . . . Time ticks blank and busy on their wrists" from *Attack*.

John Masefield :

"A wall of nothing at the world's last edge" from *Dauber* (describing fog at sea).
". . . Man, who for a tale of days
Seeks the one city by a million ways", from *Lollingdon Downs*.
"The days that make us happy make us wise", from *Biography*.
"Moments of the soul in years of earth", from *Biography*.

Robert Nichols : ". . . The ghostly sword
Of lightening", from *City of Angels*.

Robin Flower :". . . In silent places an older silence broods", from *The Pipes*.

Walter de la Mare : "Look thy last on all things lovely
Every hour", from *Farewell*.
". . . the silence surged softly backward
When the plunging hoofs were gone", from *The Listeners*.

W. H. Davies: "A rainbow and a cuckoo's song
May never come together again", from *A Great Time*.

A. Y. Campbell:

"The slippered hours their placid business ply" from *Animula Vagula*.
John Sibly? "Artillery cannot slay the daffodil", from *The Victory*.
Poetry Review, July/August, 1945.

Eleanor Glenn Wallis:

". . . hear what a bird can do
By crystal sound threaded on silences", from *Wood-Robin*.
Poetry Review, April/May, 1946.

J. Redwood Anderson:

"The sword-like splendour of ultimate truth", from *Lazarus*.
Greenwood Prize Poem, October/December, 1944.

Roy Campbell:

". . . the shawling snow", from *Tristan da Cunha*.
". . . the gorgeous burials of suns", from *Tristan da Cunha*.

Victoria Sackville-West:

"The mild continuous epic of the soil", from *The Country Habit*.

The Premium Editor's Report

I AM sorry that I cannot congratulate my competitors on any advance in the quality of their entries, indeed I might fairly commiserate them upon some recession in that respect. As the year wears on inspiration seems to flag, and may be a competition of this perennial sort, with its continual insistence upon yet another poem, is not the best of influences upon so delicate a matter as your muse. So, paradoxically, I have decided to make the competition harder. In future you must rely more upon whatever gift of self-criticism you possess and in sending me *one poem only* do your own work of deciding which is your best available poem. An announcement of the new rules for this competition will be found at the back of this number and it is only fair to those who keep the rules to remind those who do not that in future I shall disqualify them for any infraction. I have more than a suspicion that orderliness of mind is an attribute of the good poet—it is certainly true that my premium winners seldom offend by any illegality and are usually found, too, among those who are content to send me a single poem. So you are now all to be placed upon the same level, not only for your own good, but for mine.

There is one new rule upon which I should like to comment specially, and that is that which disqualifies a winner for twelve months. My ten pound carrot must not be seized too often by one competitor or the purpose of this competition will be defeated. That object is to encourage, and what could be more discouraging than to feel that the prize is unattainable. It is true, of course, that some heroic natures thrive on continual failure but, hard as I am, I hesitate to condemn you to so arid an existence. Nevertheless I shall not award a premium to just the best poem submitted, if in my opinion it is merely a one-eyed king in a kingdom of the blind. In such cases the premium will be carried forward to swell the kitty for the next contest. I can imagine the anticipations of those disqualified past-winners, whose period of rustication is drawing to a close, as they see the booty accumulating. It is up to you to disappoint them.

In commenting upon your entries for this competition I fear I am constrained yet again to repetition, vain as that so often is. I have laboured in the past to persuade you of the essential importance of emotion in the making of poetry. The result is a flood of verse written from a full heart which can do no more with the loved one, or thing, than trace its features for me. And yet I have laboured equally to convince you that mere description, however eloquent, is not enough. Do not be locked within the cage of your own vision. Use your senses as an open sesame to the greater riches which lurk in the darkness of the unconscious. Take time to digest that emotional thrill which seems to lift you above yourself. Let it lie half-forgotten in the memory to become mature and ripe for expression. Only so will you add your own riches to it when the time comes for the poem to take shape.

The painter knows this truth when he stores his landscape in his mind, to reproduce it in his studio in the cold north-light of reality; he knows that recollection will inspire his brush as no immediacy of visual pleasure could. He will however always be constrained, unless he is a Picasso, to the three dimensions of his art. The poet, on the other hand, is free of all bounds, if not all restraints, and may let his inspiration carry him where it will, save into the darkness of incomprehensibility. But he must learn first the secret of that boundless freedom,

find the key which will unlock his prison. That is his mystery and his cross. It can only be done in a mood of utter self-forgetfulness, a state of not-consciousness, in which, as it were, the veil wears thin and the hand of time dissipates the shadows and releases us from the trammels of the flesh.

How difficult then it is to be a poet! How much more a matter of temperament than of mind! That is the central truth which you must absorb and is, alas, the reason why so many people can never be poets, whatever the quality of their intellects. But be of good cheer. There is something in you, of which you know nothing, which compels you to poetic expression; and against all reason since, surely, this is not the normal mode of speech for men. You have, therefore, in your degree, the vocation, the capacity for development, the ambition for Parnassus, which you may realise to the extent of your powers if you will submit to the disciplines of novitiate. Cultivate but subdue your mind; lay your heart bare; forget yourself; these three, and the greatest of them is humility; for neither truth nor beauty can be commanded.

The premium this time is divided between three competitors as follows:

Jean Kenward of Chorley Wood	£5
Dorothy Spring of Sheffield	£3
Joan Quayle of Liverpool	£2

And in accordance with our present practice the three poems are included in this report.

The first, by Jean Kenward, exhibits most beautifully this poet's particular quality, with an added maturity which has deepened and strengthened her imaginative power. I have nothing but praise for this delightful poem. Its felicity of expression, its imaginative freedom, are alike charming and it irks me to say that in accordance with the new rule she must be disqualified from further participation in this contest for a year. However, we shall hope to welcome her as an ordinary contributor and find our consolation in that. Here is the poem.

CHILD AT NIGHT

"Who bade him thus do battle with the air
This self-armed and appointed warrior
Fighting with frantic fist the debonair
Sentry that stays by Sleep's soft barrier?

See, the diaphanous hosts of the unknown
Throng in his brain, their fey and feathery tents
Billowing out into oblivion
Their stories all locked in the elements.

He'll not surrender his battalions till
Weariness finds him suddenly alone
Deftly disarms and leaves him, silent, still,
Like Tommelise—smaller than cherry stone."

The second poem is also, in its very different way, unusual. It has all that simplicity of statement and diction, for which I plead so often, no grace notes of imagery, and yet an immediate and satisfying effect upon the reader. This is not to detract one tittle from my praise of Miss Kenward's poem which for all its

imagery still preserves an essential simplicity, but will serve to emphasize a truth not always remembered, that beauty has many faces and that creative art is subject to no rule, and is above any arbitrary human canon of taste. All that is required of a poem is that it should be truly creative. If it be that it cannot fail.

REAPER'S SONG

"When I had reaped from dawn to noon,
I rested in the heat,
And dreamed my young wife Isabel
Came walking through the wheat.
But when I stepped across the swathes
And came to where she stood,
An eyeless skull grinned back at me
From underneath her hood.

When I had wakened from my dream,
And was bewildered still,
I saw my young wife Isabel
Come singing up the hill.
Bright shone her beauty as of old,
Yet from that time to this
I seem to see the grinning skull
Beneath the flesh I kiss."

The third, and last of my winning poems is Joan Quayle's *The Tumulus*. This is again very different from either of its forerunners, being in free verse and animated, perhaps a little over-animated, by an elemental passion which we all feel at times and which we should experience more often and more deeply if we lived closer to elemental things. It is a little lacking perhaps in the rhythm which free verse should have, but no one could fail to hear the authentic note of true poetry in it. Such things are alive and vibrant and can never fail to arouse an answering response in the reader. Here it is.

THE TUMULUS

"Lying alone on this mound at midnight
I think of my love, who is not so real a lover
To me as the earth I rest on;
Who does not woo so fiercely
As this native soil, holding the dust of the dead,
Husk of the past and germ of the years to come,
Both source and essence.

There is a pale between my love and me,
For in surrender we are yet impotent
To force the barrier of finite being.
Each in each we seek
Vainly the curse of our mortality.
How can I own his strength, so transient,
Delight in limbs, so vulnerable,
So frail in all things, how can we be complete, even though abandoned.
Each to Each?

Though my arms stretch out over the ground for an eternity
Pinning me to it, tearing up the grass,
I shall be neither sated nor ashamed.
For the earth is for ever and ever and knows no shame,
Sanctions the lush growth of triumphant life,
The remorseless wilderness which will reclaim
Land lost to cities.

His warm lips seek my lips, my throat, my breast,
But the chill kiss of the wind is cosmic rapture.
There is sweat on his brow, but the falling dew
Is the spirit's intimation.
His hard arms bind me, but this rock
Is the touchstone of the soul.
His eye glitters, but the one white eye of the moon
Drags, as the earth pulls.

If he could know I lie here, wet with dew
In the still warmth of the night,
He would come and carry me
Back to his hearth, back to the gilded cage,
And in his bed I should be tender, pitiful . . . .
But the time will come when he can no longer hold me
And I shall escape, and lie with my true love for ever."

The Highly Commended list is short but each competitor sent a good poem which made in one way or another a challenge for premiumship. The names, in alphabetical order, are as follows :—

L. E. Brodie, Dublin; D. M. Moore, B.A.O.R.; Theodora Rose, New York.

The Commended List is longer but less so than in previous competitions. That is due to the recession in quality to which I have already referred and to the fact that I endeavour to the best of my ability to keep an inviolable standard. These poems all reached it.

Major J. S. Blanford, Tunbridge Wells
G. J. Blundell, East Malling
Capt. J. C. E. Bowen, Lahore
Alan Dane, Dorking
C. H. Harding, Croxley Green
Michael Hay, Highgate
Ursula Tighe Hopkins, Hampstead
Margaret Howard, London, S.W.1
E. M. Jones, Old Colwyn
Alice Miller, Oswaldtwistle
Heda Munro, Cranleigh
Morag Renwick, Norham-on-Tweed
Lilian Roworth, Nottingham
S. F. Simpson, Egremont
Rosemary C. Squires, London, N.W.1
Julien Walker, Melbourne, Derby
Gladys Ward, St. John's Wood, N.W.8
J. S. Wheatley, Scarborough
Olive M. Wood, Carlisle

The Dorothy Holmes Prize

REPORT ON THE POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION

LET me say at once that I have hesitated long as to what course I ought to pursue in connection with this Competition, whether to award the prize to that poem which in my judgment was the best submitted or whether to declare the prize not won and the competition still open. I had not supposed that such a question would ask itself when I began my task but it soon became apparent that the very title of this contest had betrayed competitors into the erroneous belief that what was wanted was a set of descriptive verses, embellished maybe with some slight moralising, nostalgic or reflective, to provide a more or less customary ending. So, in poem after poem, I made the detailed acquaintance of place after place but gained only a faint glimpse of its observer and hardly anything of his or her deeper reactions to the place described. Perhaps they experienced none and my poets were on this occasion just diligent versifiers intent mainly upon a photograph. It is well for us that Wordsworth fell into no such error when he looked at Tintern Abbey.

But I decided to content myself with a homily, which should be taken as a warning also. There is some merit indeed in good metrical description and some competitors even found it possible to be imaginatively reflective in rather obvious ways although without those flights into the unknown which known and loved scenes ought to induce in a poet. These, even if of short duration, would have produced true poems and my task would have been easy. As it is there was no possibility for me of deciding upon an outright winner among these almost equally meritorious verses about places. Everyone concerned remained more or less tethered to his or her chosen spot and if there were flights they were in a captive balloon only.

It cannot be too firmly said that the only use for places or views to a poet is as an inspiration and, to that sudden uprising of the spirit, there can be no bounds. Nature may only be used as an illustration to more sublime things and certainly never merely itself illustrated. Nothing new can be said about the physical qualities of nature but much that is fresh under their influence and in response to their beauty. It is only when we break into newness that our words take on poetic quality and a poem is born.

It has been necessary therefore to divide the prize between three competitors, and as a matter of personal choice I have placed them in the following order of merit:

Gilbert Chadwick of Coulsdon, Surrey	.. ..	£5
C. Busby Smith of Gerrards Cross	.. ..	£3
Catherine Forbes of Fulham, S.W.	.. ..	£2

I have awarded Mr. Chadwick the largest part of the prize for the following poem, and for the reason that although he never really leaves his "Lane" he yet manages to find in it a tender quality which brought his poem closest to my standard of what a poem of place should be.

IN PILGRIM'S LANE, MERSTHAM

"Along this vale, ere knowledge slew
The wisdom of a simpler age,
Banded in earnest companies
Went pious folk on pilgrimage.

Down this green trough between green waves
Of coppice-crested Downs they trod,
And every plodding, patient step
Drew them, they thought, more near to God.

Who dares be sure their hope was false?
The Faith that fired them shuns our day,
But still men seek, and sometimes find,
A Goal, a Leader and a Way.

Here, when the heat of Summer noon
Stills traffic and permitteth peace,
Or when 'neath laggard Autumn moons
The troubles of the highway cease,

The grassy verges of the lane
Seem stirred; and is it but by air?
A whisper passes, scarcely heard:
A quickening breeze? A ghostly prayer.

The fervour that the Pilgrims brought
Must leave some imprint on the place:
And here, if anywhere, ghosts walk,
But ghosts at peace and wrapt in grace.

And here the care-bewildered mind,
In solitude, yet not alone,
From fellowship unseen may learn
A wisdom greater than its own." *Gilbert Chadwick.*

Mr. Busby Smith's poem *Hambledon Lock* comes second, although this is hardly a poem of place at all, having no specific geographical application excepting for its title. It is certainly no more than a piece of wintry description, but nevertheless it contrives to be a poem in its imagery and its technical suitability to its theme.

WINTER

"The dull stare of grey water, the bitter sky
Cruel and unrelenting as a chain of steel,
And over all the scything of the water.

The handrail frozen to a grip of pain
Slicing the pale flesh in the sombre morning.
And beyond, the island, with the hand of death
Spraying up in a frenzy of cracked branches
Against the shrill whine of the angry wind.

Ice, formed like windows in a latticed casement
Gleams like a cruel eye staring out of the rushes
Twisted and wrenched with the anguish of wracked fingers.
So that it seems all the world's silent history
Lies frozen here in the agony of deep winter.

The great chains glint with cold, and like a peacock's tail
Silver, moon-coloured, there the shallow water
Sprays over the smooth stone rich with a wrinkled slime.
And over all the menace of the dark water
Throbs like a pagan ritual, cruel and unrelenting,
As, like a thunder of dull drums pounding the numbed senses
This vastness of water slips over the worn stone
Into the boiling surf, white like the near, pure snow,
To ski away into the frozen reaches. *C. Busby Smith.*

Lastly comes Miss Catherine Forbes' poem *Culross in Fife*. This has a rather literary air which is not relieved greatly by the rather obvious quality of the poet's reflections upon the theme. And yet the poem has merit in its technical excellence and is not without a certain sincerity of tone. We regret that limitations of space prevent its inclusion in this report.

The Late Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Competition

REPORT AND ADJUDICATION

IN judging a competition instituted in memory of so great a master of the Petrarchan Sonnet as the late Alfred Douglas, it would have been most inappropriate not to insist upon some likeness in quality, some echo of his faultless artistry, his perfect diction and magic felicity of phrase. Lord Alfred Douglas was the redoubtable enemy of all slipshod ways; for him the perfect word was the right one, and he could brook no looseness in technique nor any liberties with that most difficult of sonnet forms, the Petrarchan. To evade no test, to conquer and still to shine was his endeavour and his achievement. From the close disciplines of his art he gained a wide poetic freedom and that is the final justification of all prosodic rule.

In his lifetime he was most concerned to defend the original and only true form of Sonnet from variation or abuse. Whether because of that championship or because of its own inherent genius, or because of both, the Petrarchan form seems to be in no danger whatever from either the iconoclast or the jerry-builder. I have just read quite six hundred technically good examples of it and have been hard put to it to come by my decisions. Not many, certainly, approached that ultimate technical perfection of Lord Alfred Douglas at his best, but there was little to cavil at, and very many indeed were fine poems. Where, however, some contestants fell short was in their selection of theme. Too many were content to describe, beautifully enough, the moods of nature, painting the superficial aspects of life or season with real eloquence, but remaining themselves aloof, and disregarding entirely the deeper significancies which are the poet's proper concern. It is hard indeed to

dismiss good work, which is inadequately motivated, without comment; but there is no alternative. The sonnet is not only its capricious technical self, it is also, and more importantly, an emotional ejaculation, which should burn with passionate conviction and finish upon a climax which leaves nothing more to be said.

It is perhaps inevitable that the winning sonnet, and those others which I shall mention, are all, in their different ways, less polished, perfected and adorned than those of the master whom we commemorate; but an age has intervened between this and the comfortable, unhurried dignity of Lord Alfred's prime. And yet we have lost nothing of our emotional vigour; our vicissitudes have not hardened, nor our fears dulled, the sensitiveness of our hearts to the unchanging verities. Nor are we cruder, if less rotund in our periods. Relying more upon sense than sensuousness, with our newer simplicity we still arrive at that goal which is the sonnet's own.

It is with a feeling of some diffidence that I name the winner, Mrs. Muriel Spark, because owing to a development which has no true relevance to this competition she has requested me to withdraw her entry from it. That would have been unfair to a fine sonnet which was entered for judgment before the development referred to (her appointment as Acting Editor of this journal) was even contemplated, and I have compromised the matter by declaring her "Victrix, honoris causa" and depriving her of the fruits of victory. This is her sonnet. It is in plain English, devoid of rhetorical pretension, but alive and compelling in an unusual degree. From my personal knowledge of Lord Alfred I am sure he would approve my choice.

Cadmus

SPRUNG from the dragon's teeth, tremendous, bold,
Festooned and bannered, panoplied and steeled,
They fought all day, nor would one warrior yield
Until the other lay inert and cold.
So runs the old report, but who has told
Of how the sun set on the ravaged field
On dented trumpet and discarded shield
To drench them, not with blood, but molten gold.

The oft-repeated tale, the fireside story
Tell only of the tumult and the fight
But even I, proud Cadmus, turned to weep
Seeing the dead exalted by a glory
Almost divine, the base-born men of might
Magnificently prone, like gods asleep.

Muriel Spark.

That leaves me with the pleasanter but more difficult task of distributing the prize of £10; difficult because there are many claimants, and I have learned to fear the influence of personal taste upon judgment in a matter where there can be no arbitrary measure of quality. I am constrained, therefore, to a division of the spoils among three competitors in the following order:—

James Sackville Martin, Bognor Regis, £5
Phyllis Lyth, Barnes £3
Pauline Huthwaite, Grantham £2

And so that you may censure my critical acumen I print them overleaf:—

Dream Voyage

WHO lies in idleness beside a stream,
Watching the leaves which on the waters float,
And each of them a little fairy boat,
Curved cunningly to carry off a dream,
May in his fancies catch a far-off gleam
Of the vast seas and horizons remote
That beckon him and catch him by the throat
With terror of a loneliness supreme.

Yet when my spirit shall at length embark
Upon its voyage and I have passed away,
Grant I go onward, trusting that the dark
May break with morning of a brighter day,
And my frail ship with thankfulness shall mark
New harbours and shall anchor as it may.

James Sackville Martin.

Perhaps You do not like the Lines I Write

PERHAPS you do not like the lines I write
That capture every mood and pin it down
Like some poor butterfly its life half flown
With all its colours sparkling in the light.
Perhaps it is that you prefer the sight
Of roses in a sunlit garden blown;
Perhaps it is you dare not lift the stone
For fear you see the creatures of the night.

I cannot paint the sun and leave the shade,
Nor sing of joy and let the sorrow be;
I cannot see the lamb and not the blade
That gleams above it and the budding tree.
I watch all creatures wonderfully made
Caught in the net of Life's perplexity.

Phyllis Lyth.

Winter's Child

I WOULD not dwell beneath a leafy tree,
Though it were sweet its gentle shade to have;
Oh, not for that green shelter do I crave,
The dearth of winter is more dear to me
Than all the summer's rich felicity.
Give me the icy winter wind to brave,
For I care not how bitter or how grave
The dangers of this mortal journey be.

On winter eves I will not be beguiled
By fires more glowing than a summer's rose
And tender lights; for me the painful stone
Of upland paths, for I am winter's child
And I must seek the peril of the snows
Where the lost wind goes crying all alone.

Pauline Huthwaite.

My last word is that the rules for this competition will be altered in future to provide that only one sonnet may be entered by each competitor. Take your courage in your hands and send that top sonnet only. The one underneath was never as good.

SPEECH TRAINING AS A CAREER

"*Speech Training as a Career*" is concisely defined and authoritatively explained in the "Career Series" published by Vawser & Wiles (cro. 8vo. cloth, 76 pp. 5/-) a compact introduction by an expert to a rapidly expanding field with attractive possibilities for men as well as women teachers. Verse-speaking, as one of the purposes of voice cultivation, offers wide scope for the qualified trained teacher, to to whose ranks many postulants are likely to be introduced by Clive Sansom's guidance and encouragement. In another volume in this useful series Mr. Arthur Groom deals with " *The Power of Public Speaking*", in which some practice in vocal technique is desirable. As Sir Harold Mackintosh declares in his brief preface, "the ability to stand on one's feet and speak with confidence and clarity is a great asset" in private as well as public and business life—an asset thousands of young people are acquiring through their training in verse-speaking

An enlarged edition of the "*Oxford Book of Australasian Verse*" is much more representative, with much wider range, than the original 1918 edition, including—a group of young living poets, new to us except for our old friends and contributors, Jessie Mackay, Dorothea Mackellar, James Picot and Vance Palmer, the whole presenting a mirror of life as it has been lived and felt in Australia and New Zealand for more than a century. We welcome too the re-issue in Macmillan's famous Golden Treasury series (4/6) of Hugh Macdiarmid's anthology of Scottish Poetry first issued in 1940—an individual selection largely based on Gaelic influences and incidentally supporting and illustrating the value, importance and vitality of contemporary Scottish expressions in verse.

Byron's influence on European literature does not wane. He occupies the centre of the stage in Mark Aldanov's new novel, "*For Thee the Best*", (Cape, 8/6), translated from the Russian by Nicholas Wreden. But he is a shadowy personage and his heroics as the futile "*Great Strategist*" and collapse at Missolonghi diminish him and leave the reader unmoved.

Hockley Clarke, a Poetry Reviewer, whose volume of poems we noticed some time ago, has added "*The Unfolding Year*", an observant monthly chronicle of the farmer's activities, to his "*Rural Roundabout*" and "*Country Commentary*" records of English country life (Rockliff, 12/6).

"χ"

Let the Poets Sing

THIRTY years ago, when the attack on the Georgian poets began, a sincere, if shortsighted, attempt was made to destroy the pretty-pretty and put thought back into poetry. The attack was shortsighted, because it did not foresee the consequences of attempting to substitute the emotions by the intellect and the intellect's equal susceptibility to perversion. There is little to choose between bogus intellectualism and sentimentality, but what there is, is all in favour of the latter. (It is far more human.) Shortsighted, too, because in its revolutionary fervour it destroyed, as all revolutions do, the good with the bad. The lyric, one of the most delightful of man's inventions, has disappeared almost entirely from modern poetry as a result, so that, when it does nowadays appear, it does so, either tamely in some obscure Poetry Lovers' circle, or comes limping into the light of day, broken in rhythm and halt in rhyme, as though the poet still felt himself obliged to make some concession to the dissonance schools, or lacked the courage and skill of his own convictions.

The original assault was so successful that it left the field wide open for the politically conscious, guilt-ridden bourgeois intellectual who reigned in the thirties and who had, he thought, something so urgent, so important, to say, that he found no time—and still less humility—to learn craftsmanship before giving himself triumphantly to the world as a poet. It is difficult for the political to be anything other than topical. It requires the grandeur, the sureness of touch, and the universalising vision of a Dryden to rescue it from the swamps of time. The poetry of the thirties possessed none of these talents. In fact, it scornfully rejected them. For grandeur, it substituted brilliance; for sureness of touch, slickness of phrase, for universalising vision, private abracadabra. It managed, by choice to be at once topical, private and obscure. And it will—surely not by choice, but in accordance with the law of things—pay the penalty. In one hundred years' time, it will be as popular and as widely read as Spenser's critic and detractor, Gabriel Harvey, is today. Perhaps that is giving it too long.

Being, despite its left-wing proclivities, its communist protest, essentially bourgeois in origin, and having rejected the bourgeois creed of 'conformity at all costs', it had the only other bourgeois alternative left: vulgarity. We can, perhaps, forgive the bourgeois his vulgar display of material wealth and temper our disgust with pity. But the vulgarity of intellectual display is inexcusable and unforgivable. The same education which sharpened the intellect should, at the same time, have taught it good taste, humility and the aesthetic virtues of simplicity. But that education was sadly lacking. It did not even teach the difference between the 'unacknowledged legislator' and the demagogue.

The achievement of these poets can, perhaps, best be judged, not by their own already dated verse, itself, but by the spate of verse offered by their contemporary hangers-on and the weedy progeny they have left behind them. Their effect was disastrous and horrible. The pseudo-poetry to which it has given rise could flourish only in the bourgeois milieu, for it depends for its appeal, its audience, not on its own merits, but on literary snobbery. It is not at all strange that this is so. For snobbery is the very life-blood of the bourgeoisie, almost, one might say, its *raison d'être* ; and the absence of snobbery in its own literary circles, not its presence, would be fit matter for surprise. In the last fifteen years there must have been

more bogus attempts at versification offered to a gullible public as poetry, than at any other period of England's literary history. And this has taken place in a country that has claimed itself to be most distinguished by its poets. Lord David Cecil opened his essay on the English Poets in the 'Britain in Pictures' series, with such sentences as these: 'The Italians are famous for their painting, the Germans for their music, the Russians for their novels. England is distinguished for her poets . . . . The greatness of English poetry has been astonishingly continuous . . . . England has gone on producing great poets from the fourteenth century to today: there is nothing like it in the history of the arts'. It is not without significance, however, that the writer seems to identify 'today' approximately with the year 1935, remarking that already then poetry had become 'too obscure and too joyless to be widely popular'.

Since then, the descent has achieved so low a level that it is possible today to read in a popular and intelligent magazine, as I have done this day (an experience which prompted this article) a piece of critical appreciation of modern poetry in which the lamest miscarriages, by well-known poets, are chosen as jewels for sample. The rules appear to be: 1st. An unshakeable belief in one's own importance. 2nd. Ignorance of prosody. 3rd. Unintelligibility, by preference. 4th. Deafness to music. 5th. Ostracism of the lyric. 6th Fear of appearing simple and obvious (closely allied to Rules 1 and 3). 7th. Scorn for the wider public. 8th. A total lack of humour. The result unfortunately is not poetry.

It becomes clear from Rule 1 that poetry is excluded from the outset. For poetry is art. Art is humility. And humility is the first of the virtues the eternal adolescent forfeits. And most of this poetry *is* adolescent, the poetry of the thirties supremely so. Its evident desire to impress rather than to delight is one of the pointers to this. But its most significant, though, I believe, least remarked-upon characteristic is that it speaks no word to the children. No other reflection, not even its self-consciousness, more cogently argues its adolescence. The mature man finds time for, and an interested delight in, his children and the world in which their dreams are dreamt. The adolescent characteristically finds none. No time: no interest: no delight. Of course he doesn't. He is wrapped in his own private dream, the wonderful dream of himself and the world of cloudy intellectualism which he transfers to paper with such profound unintelligibility.

Most of the great poets have written some work that a child can delight in and which children always have learnt at home and at school. Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley were abundantly represented in the first book of poetry I can remember having had put before me. Even the complex Browning contributed his 'Home Thoughts from Abroad'. Yet there can be no task more laborious and less rewarding than a parent's search through the volumes and anthologies of modern poetry for one poem he could safely give his child to learn and love. It is true that in the twentieth century the world has been confronted by issues of the direst importance for the future survival of civilisation, and that the poets would have been abdicating their proper rôle in society, by refusing to face these issues and trying to point to the seat of the disease. True, too, that in doing so, they could not be expected to write poetry which a child's mind could assimilate and enjoy. But, in ignoring the children, who form an integral part of every society, are not the poets themselves suffering from the same disease that threatens the whole of civilisation? A lack of humility. A lack of tenderness. A lack of love. A lack of love of life for its own sake?

Love of life for its own sake. Here, perhaps, we have come to the very kernel

of the matter. True poetry, the poetry which has vanished from our literature, springs from no political creed, no obsession with the wonders of one's own mind no apocalyptic vision, no private neurosis, but from the whole of life itself. The whole of the human experience we call living: love, hope, hate, despair, longing, requitement, (of the man *and* of the child); a tree, the sky, the sea; a moment captured from Time, a vision, a dream. Everything. And the seat of true poetry lies in the individual breast. No school, no coterie, has ever or ever will produce genuine poetry. The poet, like every other artist, is doomed, whilst creating, to a glorious isolation, But he should live, all the same, in life. His poetry is its own justification. It has room for, but no need of a lesson, a political message, a social philosophy; for it lives in a magical world of its own creating where all these things are transformed into something other, into poetry. In that world, it is inviolate. It has little to do with the intellect and much to do with the emotions. It can be recognised at an early age and its recognition requires little specialist training. It cannot be thought-out, cannot be willed. It comes from sheer inspiration, from inspiration, alone. And although the lyric, the despised lyric, is perhaps its purest manifestation, it can exist in the form of the long poem equally as well. In the poem that is Paradise Lost; in the poem that each one of Shakespeare's plays is. Inspiration is the hall-mark and the *sine qua non* of genuine poetry, and in these works it is everywhere as present as, in the poetry nowadays admired, it is so drearily absent.

Further, true poetry is *unselfconscious*. Perhaps there is no other quality modern verse lacks so completely as this. Indeed, there has probably never been an age in civilised history in which man was so crippled by consciousness of himself. Again it is a characteristically adolescent trait; a disease shutting man off from the world about him; distorting his vision of it; exaggerating, to an absurd degree, his own importance, and maiming his delight in living. Life has not radically changed since the days when England was still producing poets, although man, with his eyes on his own works alone, may think it has. Despite his aberrations, earth's diurnal course continues: the birth of day has all its old splendour, night, its mystery. The seasons arrive and pass: Spring bursts riotous over the earth, Summer swims by into the mists of Autumn and the dark sleep of Winter. Men grow old and die; children are born. Youth still has its joy, its pang; old age its content, its fear. Love, like hope, is deathless. And there is still neither good nor bad but thinking makes it so. The response to this: the joy of living, the love of life for its own sake, has been expressed down the centuries by the English poets: in lyric, ode and dirge. That expression has come to a full-stop. That is why I chose the title I did for this article. Not because of the natural delight in song alone; not simply because metre, rhythm and rhyme can produce beauty of the highest order; but for the sake of that lost attitude to life that makes singing possible: the joy of the singing bird.

A word should also be said about ignorance of prosody, of poetical rules, and the decline of craftsmanship. It has produced verse which flounders in that sickly twilight swamp between pure poetry and pure prose. And of course, it makes pretence all so much the easier. As long as there are no rules required, no technique to master, no craftsmanship to treasure, any fraud can set himself up as a poet. Scores do; have done so with great success. For our age which has been accorded many labels, has yet to be given its proper one, a label as exact as any label can hope to be The Age of the Bogus.

The neglect of prosody is unfortunately not confined solely to the fraud. It is also characteristic (with one shining exception) of the work of what genuine poets remain. The poetry of one of the greatest living English poets, a man who has always been a moralist and preacher first, a poet afterwards—with disastrous results on his imitators—contains long passages which, were they only printed as such, would immediately be recognised as the purest and loftiest of prose. But prose all the same. Indeed there are many foreigners who cannot understand why his work is accepted as poetry in England. (And the foreign reader of English literature often has an opinion to express which we should be foolish to despise. His judgment often shows a freshness and a perspicacity our own drivel-ridden critics lost long ago). As for the intelligibility of this poetry: when before in our history has an explanatory 'jungle guide been found necessary to enable his contemporaries to understand a poet's work? Did Shakespeare, did Keats, did even Browning, need guide books to make their poetry intelligible? What, one wonders, would Mr. Tristram Shandy have to say about it all? I hazard a guess that he would tell us it was time we 'pulled off our beards'.

We live in an age of darkness and decline. Because modern poetry has grown out of and is influenced by the dark age in which we try to live, its nature and appearance is comprehensible enough. But not excusable. Being in the darkness, we cannot see properly. The creative spirit in man's breast still obstinately persists in growing and bearing its flowers and its fruits, but, being in the darkness, its growth has become weird as fungus in a dark cave. All kinds of sickly little curiosities grow there in the dark, which would shrivel up in the full light of day. But our darkness has no independent existence. Man has made his own darkness, and, amongst men it is the artist who is responsible for the light. Let us stop luxuriating in the dark and encouraging others to do the same. Let us recall the standards of aesthetic values we could recognise well enough in the light. Let us show that it is still possible for poetry to have form, and beauty, and melody, as well as realism, vitality and significance. Let the poets sing.

J. T. Brockway.

To Beauty

"They marvelled that He spoke with a woman".

BEAUTY! I turn to you again,
You, who conceived of Love,
Whose might originated rain
And fortified the dove,
Planted the jungle for the gleaming lion,
Made covert for the hare,
And entered into treaty with Orion
To leave the heavens bare.

Ah! Beauty, Beauty, I had strayed
Along a desert strand
And dwelt where ghouls and goblins preyed
About their no-man's land,
Thence did I see you terrible and holy
An ice-piled citadel:
But now in human form serene and lowly
And "hard by Sychar's well".

Ida Sutherland Groom.

Bury Them Deep

THOUGHTS you have nourished so long are dead,
Hopes, nursed so tenderly too must die.
Lift them gently from their bed
Kiss them once and lay them by.

Colourless, so cold and still
Only form do they retain.
By an effort of the will
You must bury these your slain.

Bury deep, so deep, your mind
Shall not ponder, when 'tis done.
Then lift your head, be glad to find
These your corpses gone.

D. M. Holt.

Milton and Dante

THERE can be no doubt as to Milton's acquaintance with Dante's Divine Comedy. He began the study of Italian in 1632, and is said by his biographers to have been saturated with Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto. In 1638 he went to Italy, and spent the months of August and September in Florence, the birthplace of the Divine Poet. There is, perhaps, a certain interest to be derived from a general comparison of these two great religious poets of Italy and England in details of life, character, and literary activity. Both were scholars, versed in all the learning of their day; both were deeply religious, stern and severe in their condemnation of sin, and angered at the corruption of the Church. Both were intensely patriotic, and gave of the brilliance of their minds and the strength of their bodies to the advancement of what they considered to be the best interests of their countries. Again and again the Italian inveighs against those who have suffered the garden of the empire to run waste. In the Purgatorio he pleads with the Emperor Albert:

"Come, cruel one!
Come, and behold the oppression of the nobles . . .
Come and behold thy Rome, who calls on thee,
Desolate widow, day and night with moans,
'My Caesar, why dost thou desert my side?' "
(Canto VI)*

In the next Canto he condemns the Emperor Rudolph, father of Albert,

"Who might have healed
The wounds whereof fair Italy hath died".
(Canto VII)

As a result of their neglect to rule Italy with an iron hand, and bridle its intestine strife,

"So are the Italian cities all o'erthronged
With tyrants, and a great Marcellus made
Of every petty factious villager". (Canto VI)

These last words are very reminiscent of the Englishman. According to Baillie, the Presbyterian recorder of the Westminster Assembly, at any threats to liberty "John Milton, a libertine that thinketh his wife a manacle and his very garters to be shackles and fetters to him," could be trusted to be up in arms. On the other hand, Milton is of the opinion that Britain had never been any good at governing—for "civility, prudence, love of the public good . . . are to this soil in a manner outlandish, grow not here, but in minds well implanted with solid and elaborate breeding". He puts this down to our lack of sun, "which ripens wits as well as fruits". (History of Britain) Both poets passed the latter part of their lives in hardship and suffering, living to see few if any of their ideals realised. But though Milton's eyes were darkened, he was cheered by a knowledge of his glory as a poet. It was not so with Dante. Cast forth into banishment, his property confiscated, he was doomed always to be a wanderer on the face of the earth. It is even said that an edict was promulgated condemning him, wheresoever caught, to be burnt alive. But though he never saw Florence again, Hell and Purgatory and Heaven he did see. Little remained of him but his portrait, commonly attributed to Giotto, and his books. He died at the age of fifty-six, before his fame had become fully established. His greatest work was not known in its entirety until after his death. Even in the order of their compositions we may find some resemblance

* In quoting from Dante I have used Cary's translation in the edition of 1884.

between Milton and Dante. The earliest work of each was lyrical, and the Canzoniere may be compared to Il Penseroso and L'Allegro, the Vita Nuova to Comus; and the De Monarchia (in which are discussed the relations between Church and State) to The Reason of Church Government and other political and religious tracts of Milton.

That Milton did know the writings of Dante very thoroughly is proved by an abundant variety of evidence—such as definite mention, translations of certain passages, and more or less direct references. In "Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England" the following passage occurs: "Dante, in his 19th Canto of Inferno, hath thus, as I will render it to you in English blank verse:

'Ah Constantine! of how much ill was cause,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy pope receiv'd of thee!' "

In the sonnet to Mr. H. Lawes, the musician who wrote the music for Milton's Comus, the last three lines contain a reference to the scene in Purgatory where the poet's friend Casella sings one of Dante's own songs:

"Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory."

So, too, in Lycidas the indignation of St. Peter, "The pilot of the Galilean lake", in general tone seems to have been suggested by a passage in the Paradiso (Canto XXVII). In both the English and the Italian we find reference to the keys of St. Peter, and to the "grim wolf with privy paw". Both end with a prophecy of coming punishment:

"But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once and smite no more."

And there are many other references. But the chief evidence of Dante's influence on Milton is seen naturally enough in Paradise Lost. That Milton deliberately sought a model upon which to found his great poem is proved by the passage in "The Reason of Church Government" in which he describes his doubts as to whether he should imitate the epic form exemplified by Homer, Virgil, Tasso, and Job, or the drama of Sophocles and Euripedes, or the pastoral drama as in the Song of Solomon, or the Apocalypse of St. John. No mention is here made of the Divina Commedia, and it may be that this form had not occurred to Milton as being imitable. But this does not prove that he was unacquainted with it at the time. On the contrary, there seems to be reason to believe that his determination to do something more worthy of his genius than he had done hitherto may have been still further strengthened by his knowledge of a similar determination on the part of Dante after the death of Beatrice.

Although there are many similarities between the two great poets, and between their two great poems, it is important to remember at the outset the manner in which Dante the Catholic differs from Milton the Puritan. The Italian is a mystic, dreaming dreams, and seeing visions; the Englishman is a practical theologian, and in many ways an unorthodox one at that, retelling—and, in doing so, retreating—a story of which all other stories are but episodes. This great difference, which may in part be attributed to the religious disciplines in which they had been born and bred, manifests itself at once in the structure of their poems. In Dante the three kingdoms Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, look out on one another like the tiers of some great edifice—"a great supernatural world-cathedral", in Carlyle's fine phrase. But Milton has only two kingdoms, Heaven and Hell, the earthly

paradise in between belonging first to the one, then to the other. True, he has a Limbo, "The Paradise of Fools", which is populated mainly by

> "Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
> White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery."

This is a different sort of Limbo to the usual orthodox one, which was reserved for the just who died before Christ's coming, and unbaptised infants. It cannot be compared to the Purgatorio, and in any case Dante has a Limbo of his own. But Milton has no use for a Purgatory, even were he prepared to acknowledge its existence from a theological point of view. At the period of the Creation and the Fall, with which he is concerned, there would have been no one to put in it. Milton was not writing a Pilgrim's Progress of the soul; he was presenting the cosmic plot, and telling the tale of the universe. Dante on the other hand is giving the story of how one soul fared on its passage through the worlds of the spirit, and how all others may fear and hope to fare. As Mr. C. S. Lewis points out (A Preface to Paradise Lost), Dante's is a religious poem, while Milton's is not necessarily so. For he is inviting us to look at things from the outside, which is not in itself a religious exercise. In religion man sees God face to face. In Paradise Lost we look at both in profile. Again, Dante's poem is a Divine Song distilled from many years of spiritual pain. The people of Verona when they saw him on the streets used to say: 'See, there is the man that was in Hell!' Comedies that turn out divine are not accomplished otherwise. His poem is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the Middle Ages rendered forever rhythmically visible there. But Paradise Lost, though it has great lyrical periods, is by design and effect a narrative poem. Moreover, Dante writes in the mellifluous verse of a language medium which rhymes naturally and easily. But with Milton "The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse . . . but the invention of a barbarous age." (His prefatory note to Paradise Lost).

Ruskin, the devotee of landscape, made several interesting criticisms of the two poems. (Modern Painters, III, Pt. iv, ch. xiv). He suggests that Milton, in all that he tells us of his Inferno, tries to make it indefinite: Dante to make it definite. Both describe it as being entered through gates. But within the gate all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having indeed its four rivers—the last vestige of the mediæval tradition—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by "many a frozen, fiery Alp." But Dante's Inferno is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction. There are two well-built castles; one, with seven circuits of wall, and surrounded by a fair stream, wherein dwell the great poets and sages of antiquity; and the other, a great fortified city with walls of iron, red-hot, and a deep moat round it, and full of "grave citizens"—the city of Dis. To Ruskin's way of thinking Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence in this connection. "For," he says, "it does not follow, because Milton did not map out his Inferno as Dante did, that he could not have done so if he had chosen; only, it was the easier and less imaginative process to leave it vague than to define it." But coming from a man so essentially vague as Ruskin this criticism loses much of its weight. However this may be, the Edens of the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost resemble each other in many of their details. Both are approached through forests. Both are set on a hill. In Dante the Earthly Paradise or Garden of Eden is situated at the summit of the mount of Purgatory. When Satan was hurled from heaven, a portion of the substance of the earth leapt up, thus making itself

worthy to become the habitation of that human race which was to replace the fallen angels. And when man himself fell from grace, he had to climb both physically and spiritually the steep slopes of the Mountain of Purgation to regain the "uplifted garden". Milton's Eden is rather like a many-turreted citadel in the rich profusion of some mediæval painting:

"It was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent,
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb."

Both Dante and Milton have similar ideas on forests. For both they are wild tangled, savage and terrible. There is only one exception for the Divine Poet, and that is the celestial forest, dense and verdant, which clothes the upper slopes of the mount of Purgatory, the forest through which one must pass to reach the Earthly Paradise. It is painted with flowers, and full of bird-music and the babbling of a stream. But the forest in which he wanders at the opening of the Inferno is a very different sort of place—so fear-inspiring that even to describe it was a bitter task. And for Milton a forest is the lair of wild beasts, to be contrasted with the peace of meadows and hills. (P.L. Book VII, 458). In Dante's case at least, this feeling is understandable. In Italy the forests would be set high up on the hill-sides, the home of wolf-packs, the type of all lonely and savage places. In Greek poetry this is not so. Homer, for example, seems to attach a pleasant idea, for the most part, to forests—regarding them as places of shelter and sources of wealth. In addition they have religious associations. The Greek, not much given to travelling, regarded his woods as so much valuable property. And if he ever went into them for pleasure, he might expect to meet one or two gods in the course of his walk—but no banditti. A mediæval traveller, expecting to meet no gods in the thickets, but only thieves, or a bear, besides troublesome ground for his horse, and a good chance of losing his way, regarded forests with anything but favour.

In both the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost there is an element of romance. Indeed, from one point of view Dante's poem is primarily a great romantic work. For Beatrice, from being the type of ideal human love, becomes the symbol of divine love and truth, who is to lead the poet through Paradise. Dante's description of the Divine Pageant descending from heaven, conducting Beatrice to meet him, is romantic poetry of the very highest order:

"I have beheld, ere now, at break of day,
The eastern clime all roseate; and the sky
Opposed, one deep and beautiful serene;
And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
Attempered at his rising, that the eye
Long while endured the sight: thus, in a cloud
Of flowers that from those hands angelic rose
And down within and outside of the car
Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreathed
A virgin in my view appeared, beneath
Green mantle, robed in hue of living flame:
And o'er my spirit, that so long a time
Had from her presence felt no shuddering dread,
Albeit mine eyes discerned her not, there moved

A hidden virtue from her, at whose touch
The power of ancient love was strong within me."
(Purgatorio, Canto XXX).

Similar imagery occurs in Milton's description of Eve as the serpent found her in the Garden: "Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round
About her glowed, oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained."
(P.L. Book IX, 425).

There is a school of criticism which maintains that while Milton has justified the ways of God to men, he has by no means justified them to Satan.* Consequently they suggest that "God", "the Son", "Satan", and so forth, should be regarded only as characters in a great romance. However this may be, there are some fine romantic passages in the poem. At times one cannot help feeling that Milton is putting whole passages from the Divorce Tracts into verse. It is clear that Eve is at first a woman after his own heart; she knows her station and acknowledges her inferiority:

"To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:
My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
Unargued I obey: So God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine: To know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."
(P.L. Book IV, 635).

At one period even Satan appears as an ideal lover; he is enamoured with Eve at first sight:

"Her heavenly form
Angelick, but more soft and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action, overawed
His malice."

Dante too has episodes of human love in his poem. In the Inferno there comes the incident of Francesca of Rimini, through pity at whose sad tale the poet falls fainting to the ground.

There are other differences between Paradise Lost and the Divine Comedy. Whereas Milton is concerned with a re-creation and development of the story of Genesis, Dante is in a sense more world-wide—or rather world-deep. He takes the whole of history up to his own day in the sweep of his genius. For his guide through Hell and Purgatory—a device again which is not to be found in Milton—he casts Virgil. And Cato presides over the inmates of the Purgatorio. In Hell we find a rare clutch of philosophers—Socrates, Plato, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, and Thales—besides one or two more. There too dwell Homer, Hector, Seneca, Euclid, and Ptolemy. And in the succeeding divisions of the poem popes and emperors appear with quite alarming frequency. Henry III of England is mentioned:

"Behold the king of simple life and plain,
Harry of England, sitting there alone:
He through his branches better issue spreads."

* Vide article in *Poetry Review*, "Paradise Lost as a Romance". No. 1, 1946. (Howard Parsons.)

The "better issue" is Edward I of England, of whose glory the poet was perhaps a witness on his visit to this country. Francis and Dominic are found among the saints in the Paradiso, where the Madonna herself appears, and the poet is granted the beautific vision. Saint Bernard pleads with the Virgin that Dante may have grace given him to contemplate the brightness of the Divine Majesty. He

"Saw in one volume clasped of love, what'er
The universe unfolds; all properties
Of substance and of accident, beheld
Compounded, yet one individual light
The whole. And of such bond methinks I saw
The universal form . . ."

(Paradiso, Canto XXXIII).

Contemplating this splendour, he can only describe it in the language of mysticism:

"In that abyss
Of radiance, clear and lofty, seemed methought
Three orbs of triple hue, clipt in one bound:
And, from another, one reflected seemed,
As rainbow is from rainbow: and the third
Seemed fire, breathed equally from both. O speech!
How feeble and how faint art thou, to give
Conception birth. Yet this to what I saw
Is less than little . . .

Here vigour failed the towering fantasy:
But yet the will rolled onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the love impelled
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars."

RAYMOND GARLICK.

Gray Tree

YOU stand there looking across the gray stretches
of time, as if nothing mattered—
as if love and hope and dreams and all things beautiful
were shattered.

When the bough swings to a song you do not seem
to hear,—it is nothing to you
that the green song of the living is forever singing
itself anew.

And I think if a great storm should come from out the west
and strip your branches bare,
or tear your giant roots out of the ground,
you would not care.

Blanche Robinson Williams.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1946

THE 38th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at 33 Portman Square on June 25th. The accounts were duly presented and adopted, the retiring members of the Council re-elected and the Society's Auditors re-appointed. The Meeting was memorable for two reasons, the first and foremost being the announcement of Mr. Galloway Kyle's impending retirement and the second, the decision of the Assembled members to increase the Annual Subscription for membership of the Society to £1. Mr. Kyle's resignation was received with unanimous regret tempered only by the recognition of his need for rest and the financial provision which it has been possible to make for him. Many members spoke in praise of his life-long devotion to the Society and expressed their good wishes for him in his retirement. An appreciation of his life's work appears on page 1 of this issue.

The accounts revealed that the Society's financial affairs were still in a thoroughly healthy condition. Both Income and Expenditure had increased substantially since the previous year but the balance of income unspent was much the same, at some £1,200. It is essential of course, that in a Society such as this, as much should be spent as possible upon the objects and aims for which it exists, but it is a necesary condition of survival that an adequate provision for unknown future contingencies should also be made.

One such had already presented itself and had been met. Our lease of Headquarters, which expires in March, 1948, was renewed in the early part of this year at a cost of £3,750. The first instalment, one third, of this sum was paid out of the Society's current account and it is hoped that the balance can be met in due course from the same source without disturbing invested reserves. The new lease ensures our continued occupation of the attractive house in Portman Square until March 1961.

A cheque is waiting in the office at 33 Portman Square, for Mr. C. Orten of Leicester for a premium award. We have been unable to post this cheque as the address of this gentleman is not known to us. We should be glad if he would write to us to enable us to remit.

KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

An appeal from the Marchioness of Crewe, Chairman of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association

An appeal is being launched for funds for the upkeep of the Keats-Shelley Memorial in Rome. The Memorial comprises both the house in the Piazza di Spagna in which Keats died in 1821 and the graves of Keats and Shelley in the Protestant Cemetery. Founded in 1903 by Anglo-American co-operation the Memorial commemorates not only Keats and Shelley, but Byron and Leigh Hunt as well. In the house, together with an important collection of manuscripts, pictures and relics, there is a library of nearly 10,000 volumes. During the war the chief treasures were removed for safety to Monte Cassino, where the monks concealed them from a German division sent to plunder the Abbey, until the archivist succeeded in smuggling them back to Rome in the car of one of Goering's staff officers. Meanwhile in Rome itself, Signor Cacciatore, the Curator, had managed to preserve the house so that on the liberation of the city it could be re-opened. Within a year some 15,000 visitors, among them men from all ranks of the British, Dominion and Allied forces, had been through it. The house and the collections have thus survived the war intact, but their future is now uncertain owing to lack of money. There is the most urgent need for a fresh endowment.

The future of the Keats-Shelley Memorial now depends upon public generosity. In Rome much has been achieved by the efforts of the Curator and by the initiative of the British Ambassador. In Great Britain an appeal published in *The Times* has elicited a sympathetic response, but a large sum of money is still required. Indeed, only the timely generosity of the troops and of English residents in Italy kept the Memorial open during 1946. Any sum you can send will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, The Manager, Barclays Bank (West End Foreign Branch), 1, Pall Mall East, London, S.W.1. My committee would be grateful if you would make this appeal known. Further particulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Elsa Forman, 63, Rowan Road, London, W.6.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for very many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines continually increases. In 1946 a record was established both in the number of auditions held and the number of entrants heard therein.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the coveted award for success.

Arrangements for auditions, for schools, colleges or private individuals, can be made with the General Secretary, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, from whom full particulars may be obtained. Applications for audition dates should be made as long as possible beforehand.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Editor. There is no entrance fee but competitors must observe the following rules:

1. *One poem* only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped and addressed envelope will be required. See Rule 3.
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as none will be returned in future.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Editor", THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address and the words "For Premium Competition closing —— 1st."
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.

The closing dates for the six bi-monthly Premium Competitions will be, until further notice, February 1st—April 1st—June 1st—August 1st—October 1st and December 1st.

THE LOVE LYRIC COMPETITION

This annual competition is continued with the offer of a further £10 for an original love lyric. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. Not more than two poems may be entered by each competitor.
2. The length of an entry must not exceed thirty lines.
3. The Competition will close on 31st December, 1947.
4. Entries must be typewritten, bear the name and address of the author and be addressed "Love Lyric Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.
5. The Society reserves the right to publish any poem submitted, in the POETRY REVIEW, but without prejudice to the author's right of publication elsewhere, later.
6. Competitors must be members of the Poetry Society.
7. No stamped addressed envelope is required since no entries will be returned. Competitors should keep copies of their poems.

THE EPIGRAM COMPETITION

As announced in our July/August number this competition has been declared still open, no entry having been judged worthy to be awarded the prize of £5 offered by Mr. Howard Parsons. The following rules must be observed:

1. Epigrams must not exceed four lines in length.
2. Entries must be addressed "Epigram", THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, and must be typed.
3. No entries will be returned. Competitors should retain copies.

Fuller details will be found on p. vi July/August POETRY REVIEW.

THE SCOTS POETRY COMPETITION

The above competition continues. The second of the three sums of £5 offered by Mr. William Hutcheson, C.E., for the best poem with a Scottish flavour has now to be won. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. Not more than two poems may be entered by each competitor.
2. Entries must be addressed "Doric", THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.
3. Entries must be received not later than November 1st, 1947. They will not be returned and should not be accompanied therefore by a stamped and addressed envelope.
4. All entries must be typed and should bear the authors' name and address and the words "Scots Poetry Competition".

For fuller information please refer p. iv. July/August POETRY REVIEW.

SUBMISSION TO THE EDITOR

Manuscripts may be submitted to the Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, for consideration in the ordinary way apart from entries for competitions. Such MSS should be typewritten and if their return is desired should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. The Editor can accept no responsibility for the safety of MSS although every care will be taken to ensure this. Acceptance will not imply immediate publication; payment will be made upon publication.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

This service continues to grow in popularity but it has been found necessary to amend slightly the terms upon which it is available to members. A minimum fee of 5s. will be charged in future and two poems only may be submitted for this sum. Additional poems will cost 2s. each for criticism and it is particularly requested that all poems submitted to the critic should be typed as this is as much in the pupil's interest as in his.

POETRY OF TODAY

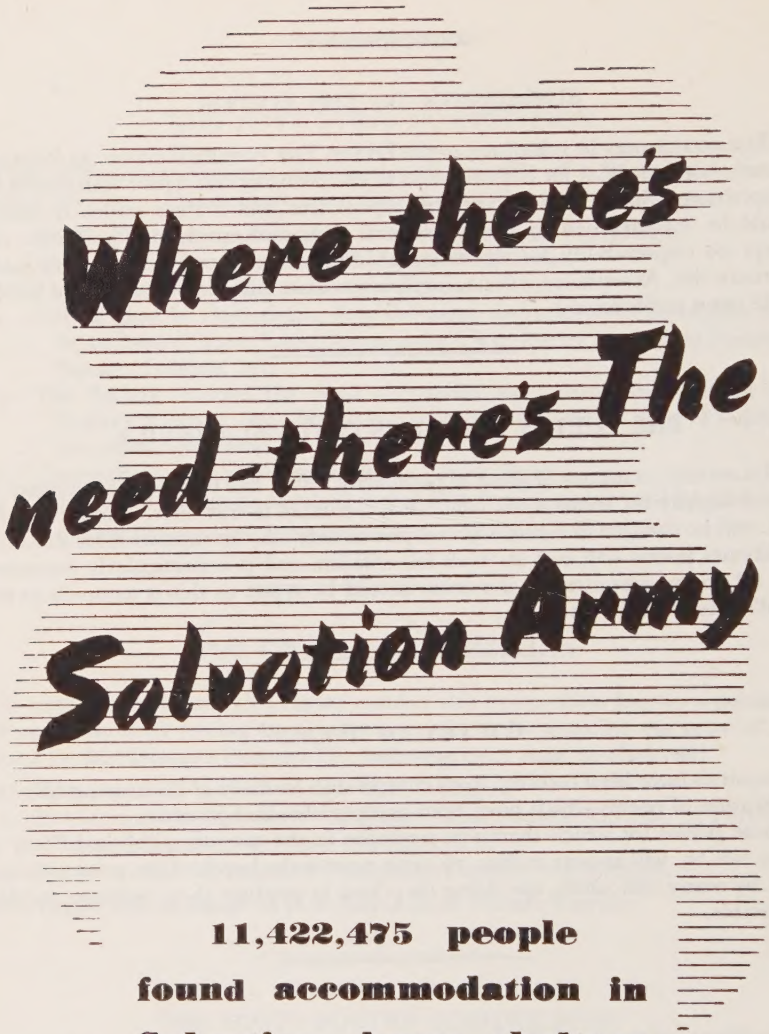
Enquiries have been received from contributors to *Poetry of Today* regarding the publication of poems which have been accepted for that journal.

Those poems for which there was no space in the recently published *Poetry of Today* No. 75, will appear in Nos. 76 or 77 now in the hands of the printers, who, beset by many difficulties, are doing their best to produce these books as quickly as possible.

The library of the Anglo-Italian Literary Society is now housed at 33, Portman Square, W.1 and is available to members of The Poetry Society.

This library includes the books of the former Dante Society, and a fine collection of other Italian classical and modern works.

The Hampstead Centre has arranged the following programme for October—December, 1947, when readings will be held at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, on *Tuesday evenings* from 8-9 30 p.m. October 2, "*Poems of Place*"; October 21, *Milton*: his life: illustrated by poems; November 4, *Milton's Cosmography*, with poems; November 18, *Milton's "Comus"*; December 2, *Ballads and Sonnets*.



11,422,475 people found accommodation in Salvation Army shelters and hostels during 1946

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